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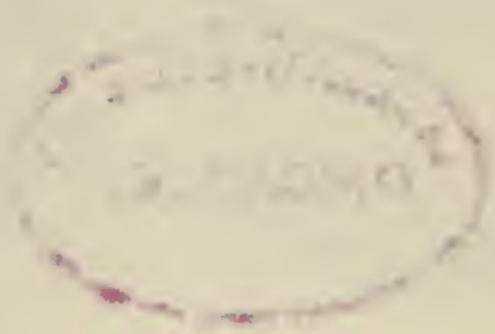
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HISTORICAL ROMANCES.

THE PAGE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY.

VOL. I.

THE
Romances of Alexandre Dumas.

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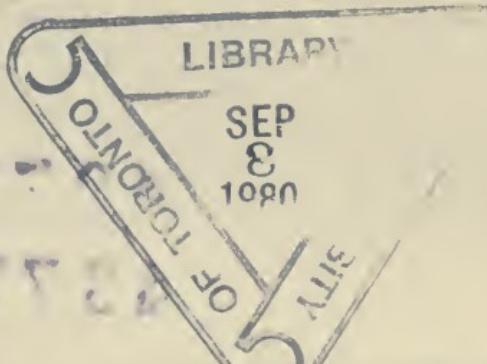
ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.

1896.



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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN "The Page of the Duke of Savoy" we meet again most of the members of the doughty band of adventurers with whom Gabriel de Montgomery is said in the "Two Dianas" to have accomplished the marvellous feat of carrying the Old Fort of Calais by escalade: Malemort, the seamed and scarred hero of a hundred fights, whose first rush was always so impetuous and reckless that he inevitably received a fresh wound at the very beginning, and was incapacitated for further service; Yvonnet the dandy, bold as a lion by daylight, and timid as a hare when the sun had gone down; Pilletrousse, the rifler of dead men's pockets; Lactance, whose excessive blood-thirstiness was only equalled by his devoutness; and the two Scharfensteins, uncle and nephew, whose feats of strength out-Hercules Hercules. Procope, Maldent, and Fracasso are new acquaintances, equally diverting, each in his particular line.

The period of this tale was crowded with events of deepest import to the world's history: it embraced the culmination of the world-empire of Charles V. and his abdication; the early years of the reign of Philip II., in which his future policy and conduct were so clearly foreshadowed; the struggle for supremacy between the Guises and Catherine de Médicis, the Florentine mother of the last three Valois Kings of France; and the irresistible growth and spread of the Reformation.

Of all the famous men who fought and governed in that age, perhaps the very noblest was Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, whom Dumas selected as the central figure of his story. All that is here told us of him and his character is amply supported by authority.

Many of the historical events woven into the plot of the "Two Dianas" are here presented to us again, mainly in forms which follow the chronicles more closely. This is especially true of the life of the Comte de Montgomery, and the circumstances attending the fatal disaster at the Tournelles. There is no reason to believe that the death of Henri II. was the result of anything but pure accident, nor has history any more to say of the Comte de Montgomery than is said by our author in the

following pages. It will be noticed, however, that the gloomy prognostications of Nostradamus reappear here in slightly different form.

As to the siege of Saint Quentin, too, the description given in the present work is entitled to the credit of being more nearly in accord with the facts than that which omits to mention Dandelot's presence, and makes Gaspard de Coligny play a subordinate part to Gabriel de Montgomery. It was the failure of Philip II. to follow up the fall of the town (inexplicable unless it was due to his jealousy of the Duke of Savoy) which saved Paris, and not the defence made by the garrison and citizens, heroic and devoted as their conduct was.

It would be perhaps more accurate to entitle “The Page of the Duke of Savoy” a part of the romance of history than an historical romance; for aside from the scenes in which the exploits of Procope and his associates appear, and the deeply touching love episode of Emmanuel Philibert and his pseudo-page, there are few chapters of which the historical accuracy can be impugned,—from the famous scene at Brussels when Charles V. laid down his sceptre, to his mock obsequies at the little convent in Spain; from Henri II. haughtily receiving the heralds of Spain and England, to

Henri II. meekly consenting to the shameful treaty of Cateau-Cambresis; from the brilliant pageant and superb jousting in the lists at the Tournelles, to the chamber of death, with Catherine de Médicis hovering jealously about the bed of the dying king, who had been so long and consistently unfaithful to her.

The epoch is one which readily lends itself to the romantic treatment, and under the hand of the master few opportunities of arousing the interest and moving the heart of the reader have been lost.

LIST OF CHARACTERS.

Period, 1528-1580.

THE EMPEROR, Charles V.

MARY OF AUSTRIA, the Queen Dowager of Hungary, sister of Charles V.

MARY, Queen of England.

PHILIP, Prince of Spain, her husband, son of Charles V.

QUEEN ELEANOR, sister of Charles V.

DON CARLOS, the Emperor's grandson.

EMMANUEL PHILIBERT, Duc de Savoie, surnamed *Tête de Fer*, nephew of Charles V.

SCIANCA-FERRO, his squire.

GAETANO, his major-domo.

CHARLES THE GOOD, of Portugal, father of Emmanuel Philibert.

BEATRICE OF PORTUGAL, Emmanuel Philibert's mother.

LEONA MARAVIGLIA, passing as Leone, the page of the Duke of Savoy.

COMTE FRANCESCO MARAVIGLIA, her father.

LA COMTESSE MARAVIGLIA.

COMTE ODOARDO MARAVIGLIA, Leona's brother, Ambassador of the Kings of France and Spain.

JOHN FREDERICK, Elector of Saxony.

ADMIRAL OF CASTILE,

DUKE OF MEDINA COELI,

RUY GOMEZ DE SILVA,

DUKE OF ALVA,

DON LUIS DE VARGAS,

} Spanish noblemen.

- FRANCESCO MARIA SFORZA, Duke of Milan.
ARCHBISHOP OF TOLEDO.
CARDINAL POLE.
WILLIAM OF ORANGE.
DON GUZMAN D'AVILA, Herald of Spain.
SIGNOR ANGELO POLICASTRO, Astrologer to Charles V.
COMTE WALDECK, in the cavalry service of Charles V.
VICOMTE WALDECK, his son.
THE BASTARD SON OF COMTE WALDECK.
ODINET DE MONTFORT, a Savoyard cavalier.
COUNCILLOR PHILIBERT BRUSSELIUS.
FRANÇOIS I., King of France.
HENRI II., his successor.
CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS,
DIANE DE POITIERS.
DIANE DE CASTRO.
MARGUERITE DE FRANCE, sister of Henri II.
THE DAUPHIN, afterwards François II.
MARY STUART, married to the Dauphin.
MARY FLEMING,
MARY SEATON,
MARY LIVINGSTON,
MARY BEATON, } Mary Stuart's "Four Marys."
ELIZABETH DE VALOIS, } daughters of Henri II.
MARGUERITE DE VALOIS,
DUC D'ORLÉANS, afterwards Charles IX.
DUC DE NEVERS, Lieutenant-general of the king.
HENRI, his brother, afterwards Henri III.
CONSTABLE DE MONTMORENCY.
GABRIEL DE' MONTMORENCY, his son.
MONSIEUR DE CHATILLON, the Constable's nephew.
FRANÇOIS, Duc de Guise.
CARDINAL DE LORRAINE,
DUC D'AUMALE,
MARQUIS D'ELBOUF,
CARDINAL GUISE. } his brothers.

ADMIRAL COLIGNY, Envoy extraordinary of Henri II.

MONSIEUR DANDELOT DE COLIGNY, his brother.

MONSIEUR DE BOISSY, Grand Equerry of France.

MONSIEUR DE VIEILLEVILLE, Grand Chamberlain.

ALPHONSE D'ESTE, Duc de Ferrara.

DUCHESSE DE NEMOURS.

CARDINAL CARAFFA.

GABRIEL DE LORGES.

AMBROISE PARÉ,

ANDREW VESALIUS, } surgeons.

RONSARD,

RÉMY BELLEAU,

DORAT,

DU BELLAY,

JACQUES AMYOT,

M. DANESIUS,

JACQUES DE LA MOTTE, Abbé de St. Prix.

DUCK D'ENGHien,

MARÉCHAL DE SAINT-ANDRÉ,

DUCK DE NEVERS,

MARÉCHAL STROZZI,

MARÉCHAL DE BRISSAC,

MONSIEUR DE THÉLIGNY,

MONSIEUR DE BREUIL,

MONSIEUR DE JARNAC,

CAPTAIN LANGUETOT,

CAPTAIN RAMBOUILLET,

CAPTAIN LOUIS POY,

MONSIEUR DANDELOT, the admiral's brother,

VICOMTE DU MONT NOTRE-DAME,

SIEUR DE LA CURÉE,

COMTE DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD,

DUCK DE MONTPENSIER,

DUCK DE LONGUEVILLE,

DUCK DE BOUILLON,

VICOMTE DE TURENNE,

} French officers.

HEINRICH SCHARFENSTEIN,	soldiers of fortune in the French service.
MARTIN PILLETROUSE,	
FRANTZ SCHARFENSTEIN,	
CÆSAR ANNIBAL MALEMORT,	
HONORÉ-JOSEPH MALDENT,	
JEAN-CHRYSOSTOME PROCOPE,	
VICTOR-FELIX YVONNET,	
CYRILLE-NEPOMUCÈNE LACTANCE,	
VITTORIO-ALBANI FRACASSO,	
COUNT EGMONT,	
COUNT HORN,	officers in the army besieging St. Quentin.
COUNT SCHWARZBOURG,	
COUNT MANSFIELD,	
DUKE ERIC OF BRUNSWICK,	
DUKE ERNEST OF BRUNSWICK,	
FIELD-MARSHAL DE BINNSCOURT,	
CAPTAIN CARONDELET,	
COLONEL NARVAEZ,	
JULIAN ROMERON,	
ALONZO DE CAZIÈRES,	
MADEMOISELLE GERTRUDE,	servants at the Château du Parcq.
PHILIPPIN,	
JEAN PAUQUET, captain of a company at St. Quentin.	
GUILLAUME PAUQUET, his brother.	
GUDULE, Guillaume Pauquet's daughter.	
MAITRE GOSSEU, a Picard peasant.	
CATHERINE, his wife.	

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THE
PAGE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN SEEN FROM THE GREAT TOWER
OF HESDIN-FERT ON MAY 5, 1555, AT ABOUT TWO
O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON.

THOSE of our readers who do not fear to take with us a stride of three centuries into the past, we will transport at once into the presence of the men whose acquaintance we wish them to make, and into the midst of the events we wish them to witness.

It is the fifth day of May in the year 1555. Henri II. reigns over France, Mary Tudor over England, and Charles V. over Spain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the two Indies, — that is to say, over a sixth part of the world.

We are in the little town of Hesdin-Fert, which Emmanuel Philibert, Prince of Piedmont, has just built near the site of Hesdin-le-Vieux, which he captured and destroyed a year ago. We are travelling, therefore, in that part of ancient France which was called Artois, and is known to-day as the department of Pas-de-Calais.

We say “of ancient France.” for Artois was for a short time reunited to the patrimony of our kings by Philippe-Auguste, the conqueror of Saint-Jean-d’Acre and of Bouvines ; but having been joined to the house of France in 1180, it was given by Saint Louis to his younger brother Robert in 1237, and passed successively, at the hands of three women,— Mahaut, Jeanne I., and Jeanne II.,— into the possession of three different families. Then, being owned by Marguerite, sister of Jeanne II., and daughter of Jeanne I., it fell into the hands of Comte Louis de Mâle, whose daughter conveyed it to the house of Burgundy. Finally, after the death of Charles the Bold, Marie de Bourgogne, sole inheritor of her father’s great name and vast wealth, married Maximilian, son of the Emperor Frederick III., and carried both name and wealth to the house of Austria, where they were engulfed like a river which is merged in the ocean.

This was a great loss to France, for Artois was a fair and fertile province ; and therefore for three years Henri II. and Charles V. had struggled, with varying fortune but with unflinching determination,— the former to recover, the latter to retain it.

During this desperate war—in which the son met again the old enemy of his father, and like his father must have his Marignano and his Pavia—each had encountered his good and evil fortunes, his victories and his defeats. Charles V. had been forced to abandon the siege of Metz in disorder, and had lost Marienbourg, Bouvines, and Dinant ; but, on the other hand, he had carried Thérouanne and Hesdin by assault, and furious at his defeat at Metz, had burned one and razed the other to the ground.

We have compared Metz to Marignano, and we do not

exaggerate in making this comparison. An army of fifty thousand infantry and fourteen thousand horse, decimated by cold, by disease, and also, it may be said, by the bravery of the Duc François de Guise and the French garrison, vanished like mist, disappeared like smoke, leaving, as the only trace of its existence, ten thousand dead, two thousand tents, and one hundred and twenty cannon !

The rout had been so complete that the fugitives had not even sought to defend themselves ; and when Charles de Bourbon was pursuing a body of Spanish cavalry, their captain turned his horse, and riding up to the French officer, "Whether you be a prince or a simple gentleman," said he, "if you fight for glory, seek some other occasion ; for now you are slaughtering men who are not only too feeble to resist, but without strength to escape."

Charles de Bourbon sheathed his sword and sounded a recall, and the Spaniards continued their flight without further molestation.

Charles V. was far from imitating his rival's generosity, and after the capture of Thérouanne gave up the town to pillage, and then razed it to the ground, respecting neither churches, monasteries, nor hospitals ; and finally, that he might not leave one stone upon another, he called in the peasants of Flanders and Artois to scatter the fragments.

The summons to the work of destruction had been obeyed. The inhabitants of Artois and Flanders, who had sustained losses at the hands of the garrison at Thérouanne, came flocking in, armed with pickaxes and hammers, and the city had disappeared like Saguntum under the foot of Hannibal, like Carthage blasted by the breath of Scipio.

Hesdin had met the same fate as Thérouanne. But at this time Emmanuel Philibert had been appointed to the command of the imperial troops in the Netherlands, and not being able to save Thérouanne, had determined at all events to rebuild Hesdin. A few months of incessant labor had accomplished this, and a new city had risen, as if by enchantment, about a quarter of a league from the old one. This new city, situated in the midst of the marshes of Mesnil upon the banks of the Canche, was so well fortified that one hundred and fifty years later it excited the admiration of Vauban, although during this period of time the system of fortifications had entirely changed.

The founder had called this new town Hesdin-Fert, in memory of its origin ; that is to say, he had added to its name these four letters, "F. E. R. T." given with the white cross by the Emperor of Germany to Amadeus the Great, thirteenth count of Savoy, after his successful defence of Rhodes, and which signified, "Fortitudo ejus Rhodum tenuit," — that is to say, "His courage saved Rhodes."

This, moreover, was not the only marvel effected by the young general to whom Charles V. had given the command of his army. Thanks to the rigid discipline which he had established, the unhappy province was beginning to breathe freely, after being devastated by four years of incessant war. The strictest orders for the suppression of all pillage and marauding had been issued and enforced ; every officer offending was placed under arrest, every soldier taken in the act was hanged.

The consequence was, that, as hostilities had almost ceased during the winter of 1554 and 1555, the inhabitants of Artois had regarded the last four or five months, in comparison with the three years which had intervened

between the siege of Metz and the rebuilding of Hesdin, as something like a revival of the golden age.

It must be confessed that now and then some farm or château was burned or sacked, either by the French, who held Abbeville, Doulens, and Montreuil-sur-Mer, and who occasionally made incursions into the enemy's country, or else by those incorrigible freebooters, the German mercenaries, who followed in the train of the imperial army; but Emmanuel Philibert made so good head against the French, and inflicted so speedy punishment upon the freebooters, that such catastrophes were becoming rarer every day.

This, then, was the condition of things in the province of Artois, and particularly in the neighborhood of Hesdin-Fert, at the time of the opening of our story on the 5th of May, 1555.

And now, after giving our readers some idea of the moral and political state of the country, we must describe its material aspect, which was very different then from what industry and cultivation have since made it.

Let us suppose, then, in order to perform this difficult task which we have undertaken, the object of which is to recall an almost forgotten period, what on that 5th of May, 1555, toward two o'clock in the afternoon, a man would have seen who from the highest tower of Hesdin, with his back to the sea, had looked along the horizon extending in a semi-circle before him, from the northern extremity of that little chain of hills behind which Béthune is hidden, to the last southern hillocks of the same chain, at the foot of which lies Doulens.

At first he would have seen, immediately before him, narrowing to a point toward the banks of the Canche, the dense and dark forest of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, whose vast expanse of green, like a mantle thrown over the

shoulder of the hill, reached to the foot of the opposite slope and dipped its borders in the sources of the Scarpe, which is to the Escaut what the Saône is to the Rhone, what the Moselle is to the Rhine.

Upon the right of this forest, and consequently to the left of the observer whom we suppose to be standing upon the highest tower of Hesdin-Fert, in the valley under the shelter of these hills which form the horizon, are the villages of Enchin and Fruges, half hidden in the bluish smoke issuing from their own chimueys, and which envelops them like a thin mist or a transparent veil, — an indication that the chilly inhabitants of these northern provinces, although the spring days had made their appearance, had not yet bidden a final adieu to the fire, that cheery and faithful friend of the winter season.

In advance of these two villages stands a rustic dwelling, half château, half farm, which bears the name of "Le Parcq," and which seems like a sentinel placed in advance of his troop, but who does not altogether fancy the idea of being beyond the protection of his fellow-soldiers.

The high-road, like a long golden ribbon, passes in front of Le Parcq, and winds among the bright green trees that border the sombre forest, until at length it branches out in two directions, — one leading straight into Hesdin, and the other following the margin of the wood, finding its way, not in a very straight line, it must be confessed, to the villages of Frévent, Auxy-le-Château, and Nouvion-en-Ponthieu.

The plain which extends from these three places to Hesdin lies exactly opposite to that which we have been describing ; that is to say, it forms the left of the valley of Saint-Pol, and consequently lies on the right of a person standing on the high tower of Hesdin-Fert.

This plain forms the most interesting part of the view, — not that it has any very remarkable natural characteristics, but only because at this moment it is animated by the result of fortuitous circumstances.

While the opposite plain is carpeted with waving grass, this one is covered by the camp of the Emperor Charles V., which, surrounded by trenches and enclosed by palisades, constitutes a city of tents.

In the centre of this city of tents, like Notre-Dame de Paris in the Cité, like the Château des Papes in Avignon, like some stately three-decker in the foaming waves of the ocean, towers the imperial pavilion, from whose corners hang four standards, any one of which might have satisfied the highest human ambition, — the standard of the Empire, the standard of Spain, the standard of Rome, and the standard of Lombardy ; for this hero, conquering, valiant, victorious as he is called, has been crowned four times.

He has been crowned at Toledo with the diamond crown as King of Spain and the Indies ; at Aix-la-Chapelle with the silver crown as Emperor of Germany ; at Bologna with the golden crown as King of the Romans, and with the iron crown as King of the Lombards. And when opposition was made to his wish to be crowned at Bologna instead of going as was customary to Rome and Milan ; when he was reminded of the brief of Pope Stephen which prohibited the golden crown from leaving the Vatican, and of the decree of the Emperor Charlemagne, who declared that the iron crown should not be taken out of Monza, — the conqueror of François I., of Soliman, and of Luther haughtily replied that he had been accustomed not to run after crowns, but to expect crowns to come to him. Above these four standards waves his own flag, displaying the Pillars of Hercules, not as the confines of the Old World, but as the gates of

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the New, and bearing this ambitious device, greater for its mutilation, *Plus ultra*.

Some fifty paces from the emperor's pavilion rises the tent of his commander-in-chief, Emmanuel Philibert, which is distinguished from those of the ordinary soldiery only by the two standards which adorn it, one of which displays the silver cross of Savoy on its red ground, with the four letters, "F. E. R. T." whose meaning we have already explained; and the other, Emmanuel's personal arms,— a hand raising a trophy of lances, swords, and pistols, with the motto, *Spoliatis arma supersunt* ("The despoiled have still their arms").

The camp overlooked by these two tents is divided into four parts, through which winds the river, crossed by three bridges. The first division is assigned to the Germans, the second to the Spanish, the third to the English; the fourth contains the park of artillery entirely renewed since the defeat at Metz, and which, since the addition of French pieces taken at Thérouanne and Hesdin, consists of one hundred and twenty cannon and fifteen bombards. Upon the breech of each of the pieces taken from the French, the emperor has caused to be engraved his two favorite words, *Plus ultra*.

Behind the cannon and the bombards are ranged in three lines the wagons and carts containing the ammunition; sentinels, sword in hand, with neither arquebuse nor pistol, take care that no one approaches these volcanoes, which a single spark would be sufficient to set on fire. Other sentinels are stationed just outside the enclosure.

In the streets of this camp, arranged like those of a city, move thousands of men with military activity, tempered however by German gravity, Spanish pride, and English phlegm.

The sun shines upon all these arms, which give back its rays in flashes ; the wind plays with all these standards, all these banners, all these pennons, whose silken folds and brilliant colors it rolls and unrolls according to its caprice.

This activity and noise, which float always upon the surface of multitudes and of oceans, are in remarkable contrast with the silence and solitude on the other side of the plain, where the sun shines only upon the shifting mosaic of fields of waving grain, which are at different stages of maturity, and where the wind stirs only those flowers of the field which young girls delight to weave into garlands of purple and azure, with which to adorn themselves on Sunday.

And now that in the first chapter of our book we have seen what might have been presented to the view of a man from the highest tower of Hesdin-Fert on the 5th of May, 1555, let us devote the second chapter to showing what would have escaped his sight, however penetrating it might be.

CHAPTER II.

THE ADVENTURERS.

THAT which would have escaped the notice of this man, however searching his gaze, is what was taking place in the thickest and consequently most gloomy spot in the forest of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, in the remotest corner of a cavern which the trees covered with their shade and which the ivy enveloped with its network ; while for the greater security of those who occupied this cavern a sentinel hidden in the brushwood, lying flat on the ground, as motionless as one of the trunks of the trees by which he was surrounded, kept careful watch to prevent any disturbance of this important assembly, at which, in our capacity of romancer,—that is to say, of magician, to whom all doors are open,—we invite our readers to be present.

Let us take advantage of the instant when, preoccupied by the noise made by a frightened hare in bounding through the brakes, this sentinel, who has not seen us but whom we have discovered, turns his eyes in the direction from which the noise comes, to slip unseen into the cavern, and concealing ourselves behind a projecting ledge of rock, let us observe, to the smallest details, whatever may happen there.

The cave is occupied by eight men, who differ from one another in face, dress, and character, but who appear, from the arms they carry, to have adopted the same calling. One of them whose face expresses cunning and

sharpness, and whose fingers are covered with ink, by reason of his repeated efforts to free his pen from the hairs so plentiful in the ill-made paper of the period, is writing fast, a large stone making an admirable table ; a second is standing like a statue by the side of the first, and holding a blazing pine-torch by way of light, whose red, smoky glare not only lights up the writer and his paper, but also casts fitful bursts of brilliant light upon the torch-bearer and his six companions.

That the writing is some agreement which is of interest to the whole company is sufficiently proved by their eager countenances. Three of the men, however, appear less engrossed in it than the rest.

The first is an elegant young man, who may be some twenty-five years of age. He is dressed in a beautiful buffalo-hide cuirass, which if not ball-proof is at least dagger-proof ; under this he wears a tight-fitting jerkin of claret-colored velvet, somewhat faded, it is true, but still presentable, the sleeves of which are cut *à l'Espagnole*, — that is to say, in the very latest fashion, as are also his green velvet breeches. He wears cavalry boots, the legs of which are sufficiently high to protect the thigh when the wearer is on horseback, and flexible enough to settle down below the knees when he is walking.

He is singing a rondeau by Clement Marot, as he strokes his fine black mustaches with one hand and with the other combs his hair, which he wears rather longer than is the fashion at this period, in order, doubtless, to retain the beauty of the soft, glossy waves with which Nature has endowed it.

The next is a man of about thirty-six, but whose face is so scarred and disfigured that it is impossible to discover in it what his age may be. His arm and a portion of the chest are naked, and upon every exposed part of

his body there are a series of scars not less numerous than those which mark his face. He is engaged in binding up a wound in the arm, which fortunately is the left one, and consequently he does not suffer so much inconvenience as if the right arm were disabled. He holds between his teeth the end of a linen bandage, with which he binds on the wound a handful of lint steeped in some marvellous unguent, of which a gypsy had given him the receipt, and in which he seems to have entire confidence. He utters no complaint, and appears as insensible to the pain as if the limb in the cure of which he is engaged were of oak or pine.

The third is a tall, thin, ascetic-looking individual, about forty years of age, who is kneeling in a corner telling beads with a rapidity which would have done credit to the most active monk in the universe, and repeating, with a volubility peculiarly his own, a dozen *Paters* and a dozen *Aves*. From time to time his right hand abandons the chaplet, and resounds upon his breast like a cooper's hammer upon an empty cask ; but as he repeats two or three times in succession in a loud voice the *Mea Culpa*, his hand returns to his chaplet, which turns around as rapidly as a rosary in the hands of a monk, or the comboloio in the hands of a dervis.

The three personages who are yet to be described have characteristics, we are glad to say, not less marked than those of the five whom we have had the honor of presenting to our readers.

One of them is leaning his elbows on the stone which serves the writer for a table, and follows the movements of the pen with his eyes, as a spider watches every motion of the fly which is to serve for his dinner. His face is a strange mixture of cunning and common-sense, knavery and good-fellowship. He may be about forty years old,

for the thick eyebrows which shade his deep-set eyes are already turning gray.

Another is lying at full length on his face. He has found a stone suitable for sharpening swords and poniards, and is profiting by this circumstance — with the help of an abundant supply of saliva and continued friction upon the stone — to make a new point for his dirk, which has become very blunt. His tongue, which he presses between his teeth and which is sticking out of the corner of his mouth, indicates the attention he gives and the great interest he takes in his work, — with which, nevertheless, he is not so preoccupied as to be unable to attend to the discussion. If what he hears meets his approbation, he simply gives a nod of approval; if on the contrary it wounds his moral sense or runs counter to his own ideas, he starts up, approaches the writer, places the point of his dirk on the paper, saying these four words, "Pardon, what do you say?" and takes away his weapon only when an explanation is given to his satisfaction, which he expresses by a more abundant salivation and more vigorous friction between his dirk and the stone, — thanks to which the lovely instrument promises soon to become again as sharp as ever.

The last, — and we begin to realize the mistake we have made in placing him in the category of those who seemed most interested in the discussion going on between the scribe and his assistants, — the last, we say, leaning against the side of the cave, his arms hanging by his side, his eyes lifted to the sky or rather to the damp and gloomy roof of the cave on which play like will-o'-the-wisps the flickering rays of the pine torch, seems at once a dreamer and a poet. What is he seeking at this moment? The solution of some problem like those solved by Christopher Columbus and Galileo? Is it the

form of a tiercet such as Dante made, or of a stanza such as Tasso sung? No one knows except the demon which dwells in him, and which is so little interested in material things — absorbed as it is in the contemplation of abstract things — that it allows every portion of the worthy poet's clothing to fall in tatters, except those which are of iron, leather, or steel.

We have drawn the portraits, both good and bad ; now let us give to each its name. The scribe is called Procope ; he is a Norman and was educated for a lawyer, and he spices his conversation with quotations from the laws of Rome and of Charlemagne. Whoever makes a written agreement with him may expect a lawsuit. If however one is satisfied with his word, that is as good as gold ; but his way of keeping his word is not always in harmony with the common ideas of morality. We will give an example of this, which at the same time will explain his present adventurous mode of life. A seigneur of the court of François I., with three of his companions, came one day to propose to him a transaction. He knew that the royal treasurer that very night was to carry from the Arsenal to the Louvre one thousand crowns in gold ; the plan was to stop the treasurer at the corner of the Rue Saint-Paul, take from him the thousand gold crowns, and divide them among themselves in this way, — five hundred to the seigneur, who would wait at the Place Royale until the deed was accomplished, and who on account of his rank claimed one half of the sum ; the other half was to be divided among Procope and his three companions, who would each have one hundred and twenty-five crowns. The word was pledged on both sides, and the thing was done according to agreement ; but when the treasurer was duly robbed, murdered, and thrown into the river, the three

companions of Procope ventured this proposition, — that instead of going to the Place Royale, they should take their way toward Notre-Dame and keep the thousand gold crowns instead of remitting five hundred to the nobleman. But Procope reminded them of their pledged word.

“Gentlemen,” he said gravely, “you forget that thus we should fail to keep our agreement, that thus we should defraud a client! We must have loyalty before all things. We will remit to the duke” (the seigneur was a duke) “the five hundred gold crowns which are due to him, in full count. But,” he continued, perceiving that the proposition excited some murmurs, “*distinguimus*; when he shall have received them and recognized us as honest men, there is nothing to prevent us from concealing ourselves in the cemetery of Saint-Jean, which I am very sure that he will pass; it is a lonely place and very favorable for ambuscades. We will treat the duke as we have treated the treasurer; and as the cemetery of Saint-Jean is not very far from the Seine, they will both be found to-morrow in the nets at Saint-Cloud. So that instead of one hundred and twenty-five crowns, each one of us will have two hundred and fifty, which two hundred and fifty crowns we can enjoy and use without remorse, having faithfully kept our word with this good duke.”

The proposition was accepted with enthusiasm, and was carried into execution. Unfortunately, in their haste to throw him into the river, the four associates did not perceive that the duke had not ceased to breathe; the coolness of the water restored his strength, and instead of going as far as Saint-Cloud, as Procope hoped, he reached the Quai de Gèvres, hastened on to Châtelet, and gave to the provost of Paris, who at this time was

Monsieur d'Estourville, so exact a description of the four robbers that from that time forth they thought it best to keep away from Paris for fear of arrest ; in which case, in spite of Procope's profound knowledge of the law, they would have been obliged to give up that to which all persons, however philosophical, cling more or less, — that is to say, existence.

Our four blades had therefore left Paris, each one going in the direction of one of the four cardinal points. The northern course fell to the lot of Procope. Thus it happens that we have the pleasure of finding him wielding the pen in the cavern of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, drawing up, by the choice of his new companions who had rendered this homage to his merit, the important instrument to which we shall presently give our attention.

The individual who held the torch bore the name of Heinrich Scharfenstein. This unworthy disciple of Luther had been driven, by Charles V.'s persecution of the Huguenots, into the ranks of the French army, together with his nephew Frantz, who is at this moment keeping watch at the mouth of the cave. These are two giants who may be said to be animated by one soul and actuated by one mind. Many persons contend that one mind is not sufficient for two bodies each six feet tall ; but the Scharfensteins are not of this opinion, and are wholly satisfied with the arrangement.

In ordinary life they rarely condescend to have recourse to assistance, whether of man, instrument, or machine, in order to attain their ends. If some heavy body is to be moved, instead of trying to find out, like our modern men of science, by what dynamic force Cleopatra transported her vessels from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, or what machinery Titus used to raise the gigantic blocks of the Circus of Flavian, they boldly

surround the object to be moved with their four arms, they form an infrangible chain with their fingers of steel, they make a simultaneous effort with the precision which distinguishes all their movements, and the object leaves its place for that which they intend it to occupy. If a wall is to be scaled or a window to be reached, instead of dragging after them, as their companions do, a heavy ladder, which hinders their progress when the expedition succeeds, or which must be abandoned as a proof of criminality in case of failure, they go empty-handed to the work in hand. One of them, no matter which, leans against the wall ; the other mounts upon his shoulders, and if necessary upon his hands raised above his head. With the aid of his own arms the second reaches thus a height of from eighteen to twenty feet, a height almost always sufficient to gain the top of a wall or the balcony of a window.

In battle there is always the same system of physical association. They march side by side and with equal step. One strikes while the other plunders ; when the one who strikes is tired of striking, he simply passes the sword, the sledge, or the axe to his companion with these words only, "It is your turn." Then the rôles change ; the despoiler becomes the striker, and the striker takes the place of the despoiler. It is true that their manner of striking is well known and highly esteemed ; but we think that on the whole they are valued more for their arms than their brains, their strength than their intelligence. This is the reason why one has been appointed to stand sentry outside, and the other to act as chancellor within.

As for the young man who is stroking his black moustache and combing his curly hair, he is called Yvonne ; he is a Parisian by birth and a Frenchman in feeling.

Besides the physical advantages we have already described, he has feet and hands like a woman's. In time of peace he complains unceasingly. The fold of the rose-leaf hurts him, as it did the ancient Sybarite; he is lazy when he is required to walk; he is dizzy at the thought of climbing; it gives him the headache to think. Impressionable and nervous as a young girl, his sensitiveness requires the most careful consideration. In the daytime he utterly detests spiders, he has a horror of toads, he becomes sick at the sight of a mouse. He requires to be beside himself with a grand passion before he will venture out into the darkness, to which he has an antipathy. To be sure,—to do him justice,—he always has some grand passion; but almost always, if the rendezvous is appointed for the night, he comes into the presence of his mistress frightened to death and trembling all over; and as many reassuring words, ardent caresses, and considerate attentions are necessary to compose him as Hero lavished upon Leander when he entered her tower all dripping with the water of the Hellespont.

It is true that the moment he hears the sound of the trumpet, as soon as he smells the powder and sees the standards borne along, Yvonnet is no longer the same man; he undergoes a complete transformation,—no more idleness, no more dizziness, no more headaches! The young girl becomes a ferocious soldier, cutting and thrusting,—a veritable lion, with paws of iron and teeth of steel. He who hesitates to ascend a pair of stairs to reach the bedchamber of a pretty woman climbs a ladder, hangs by a rope, suspends himself by a thread even, in order to be the first to gain the top of the wall. The battle finished, he washes with the greatest care his hands and face, changes his linen and clothes, then gradually becomes again the young man whom we see at this

moment stroking his mustache, combing his hair, and flipping off with the end of his fingers the impertinent dust which is sticking to his clothes.

The one who is binding up the wound he has received in his left arm is called Malemort. His is a gloomy and melancholy mind, which has only one passion, one love, one joy,—war. Unfortunate passion, love illy compensated, joy fleeting and fatal ; for at the very first taste of carnage, thanks to that reckless fury with which he throws himself into the combat, and to his carelessness, while striking others, about his own safety, he receives some frightful pike-thrust, some terrible musket-shot, which stretches him on the ground, where he groans lamentably, not from the pain of his wound, but from the pain of seeing the fête go on without him. Fortunately, his flesh heals quickly and his bones knit readily. At the present time he can count twenty-five wounds,—three more than Cæsar! — and he hopes, if the war continues, to receive twenty-five more before the final one shall put an end to this career of glory and pain.

The thin individual on his knees in the corner telling his beads is Lactance. He is an ardent Catholic, and can scarcely endure the presence of the two Scharfensteins, whose heresy he fears will contaminate him. Forced by the practice of his profession to fight against his brothers in Jesus Christ, and to kill as many of them as possible, there is no penance he does not impose upon himself to atone for this cruel necessity. The gown with which he is at this moment clothed, and which he wears without vest or shirt, next to the skin, is lined with a coat of mail,—although sometimes the coat of mail becomes the fabric, and the cloth the lining. For in combat he wears the coat of mail outside as a cuirass ; when the battle is ended he wears the coat of mail inside, and it serves as

sackcloth. There is a certain satisfaction in being killed by him ; he who dies by the hand of this holy man is sure at least that prayers will be offered for him. In the last engagement Lactance has killed two Spaniards and one Englishman ; and as he is in arrears with them, especially on account of the heresy of the Englishman, for whom an ordinary *De profundis* is not sufficient, he is saying, as we have seen, many a *Pater* and many an *Ave*, resigning to his companions his share of interest in the temporal concerns which are under discussion at this moment.

The man who is resting his hands on the table, and who, unlike Lactance, follows with rapt attention every stroke of Procope's pen, is Maldent. He was born at Noyon ; his father was from Le Mans, and his mother from Picardy. His youth has been spent in extravagance and folly ; having arrived at mature age, he wishes to make up for lost time and attend to his affairs. He has met with a multitude of adventures, which he relates with a naïveté not without its charm ; but it must be confessed, this naïveté disappears completely when he argues with Procope some point of law. Then they make real the legend of the two Gaspards, of which they are perhaps the heroes, the one from Le Mans and the other from Normandy. Maldent gives and takes bravely a sword-thrust ; and although he may be far from having the strength of Heinrich or of Frantz Scharfenstein, the courage of Yvonnet, or the impetuosity of Malemort, he is a companion to rely upon in need, who would never desert a comrade.

It is Pilletrousse who is sharpening his dirk and trying the point with the end of his finger. He is a thorough mercenary. He has served by turns the Spanish and the English. But the English bargained too much, and the

Spanish did not pay enough ; he therefore determined to work on his own account. Pilletrousse prowls about the highways. At night, especially, the highways are infested with thieves of all nations. Pilletrousse robs the thieves ; but he respects the French, his fellow-countrymen, so to speak, — Pilletrousse is Provençal. In respect to them he is even generous, — if they are poor, he assists them ; if they are feeble, he protects them ; if they are sick, he takes care of them. But if he meets with a real fellow-countryman, — that is to say, a man who was born in the country between Mount Viso and the mouth of the Rhône, between Comtat and Fréjus, — this man can dispose of Pilletrousse, body and soul, blood and money ; and it is Pilletrousse who will seem to be under obligation.

Finally, the ninth and last, who stands with back to the wall, who is swinging his arms and looking upward, is Fracasso. He is, as we have said, a dreamer and a poet ; unlike Yvonnet, who shuns the darkness, he loves these fine nights lighted only by the stars ; he loves the indented banks of the river ; he loves the sound of the waves upon the sea-shore. Unfortunately, forced to follow the French army wherever it goes, — for although an Italian, he has consecrated his sword to the cause of Henri II., — he is not at liberty to wander at his own will. But what matter ? For the poet there is inspiration in everything ; for the dreamer everything is food for revery ; but then the characteristic of the dreamer is distraction, and distraction is fatal in the career adopted by Fracasso. Often in the midst of a battle Fracasso stops suddenly to listen to the sound of the bugle, to look at a passing cloud, or admire some interesting feat of arms. Then the enemy who is nearest Fracasso profits by this preoccupation to aim at him quietly a fearful thrust, which restores him to his senses and arouses him

from his ecstasy. But woe to this enemy if, in spite of his favorable opportunity, he has calculated badly and failed to stun Fracasso with the blow! Fracasso will avenge himself, not for the attack upon himself, but to punish the intruder who has brought him down from the seventh heaven where he was soaring, borne on the bright-hued wings of fantasy and imagination.

And now that we have given a description of our adventurers, — some of whom cannot be wholly unknown to those of our friends who have read “Ascanio” and “The Two Dianas,” — let us state the circumstances which have brought them together in this cavern, and the character of the mysterious document to the wording of which they are giving their whole attention.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH THE READER MAKES FURTHER ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE HEROES TO WHOM WE HAVE INTRODUCED HIM.

ON the morning of that 5th of May, 1555, a little company of four men, who apparently were a part of the garrison of Doulens, left that city, slipping out through the Arras gate, as soon as that gate, we will not say had been opened, but was in process of opening.

These four men, wrapped in heavy cloaks, which might serve to conceal their arms as well as to protect them from the cold morning wind, had proceeded along the banks of the river Authie, which they followed with every precaution to its very source. From that point they had branched off to the chain of hillocks of which we have already spoken, followed, always with the same precautions, its western course, and after a two hours' walk entered the borders of the forest of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise.

There one of them, who appeared to be more familiar than the others with the locality, took the lead, and recognizing his whereabouts, now by means of a tree of denser foliage or more bare of branches than the others, now by means of a rock or pool of water, he reached with very little deviation the mouth of this cavern to which we conducted our readers at the beginning of the last preceding chapter.

Then he made a sign to his companions to wait a moment, observing attentively the grass, which he thought

newly trodden down, and certain branches which seemed to him to be freshly broken. Then he threw himself flat on the ground, and creeping like a snake, disappeared within the cavern.

Very soon his companions, who had remained outside, heard the sound of his voice ; but there was nothing in its tone to alarm them. He was calling to the depths of the cavern ; and as his only answer was silence and solitude, — as he heard, notwithstanding his twice-repeated call, only the echo of his own voice, — he did not hesitate to come out and summon his companions to follow him.

The three men followed him, and after some difficulties, soon however overcome, found themselves in the interior of the cavern.

“ Ah ! ” murmured he who had so skilfully served as guide, breathing a sigh of relief, “ tandem ad terminum eamus.”

“ And what may that mean ? ” asked one of the three adventurers, who had a very strong Picard accent.

“ That means, my dear Maldent, that we are nearing, or rather have reached, the end of our journey.”

“ Pardon, Monsieur Brogope,” said another, “ but I did n’t understand. Did you, Heinrich ? ”

“ I did n’t understand either.”

“ And why the devil do you want to understand ? ” replied Procope, — for the reader has already guessed that it was our lawyer whom Frantz Scharfenstein addressed as “ Brogope,” — “ is it not enough if Maldent and I understand ? ”

“ Yes,” answered the two Germans, philosophically, “ that is enough.”

“ Well, then,” said Procope, “ let us sit down and eat and drink to pass the time while I unfold my plans.”

"Yes, yes," said Frantz Scharfenstein, "let us eat and drink to pass the time, and he will unfold his plans."

The adventurers looked about them ; and as their eyes were becoming accustomed to the darkness, which, besides, was not so great near the entrance as in the remoter parts of the cavern, they saw three stones, which they placed near together that they might talk more confidentially.

As they could not find a fourth stone, Heinrich Scharfenstein politely offered his to Procope, who had no seat ; but Procope as politely declined it, spread his cloak upon the ground, and lay down upon it.

Then they took from wallets carried by the two giants some bread, cold meat, and wine ; they put it all in the middle of the semicircle of which the three adventurers who were seated formed the arc, and of which Procope, who was lying down, formed the chord ; then they attacked this improvised breakfast with a ferocity which proved that the morning walk they had just taken had not been without its effect upon their appetites.

For about ten minutes nothing was heard but the noise of teeth craunching, with a regularity which would have done credit to machinery, bread and the flesh and even the bones of poultry which had been stolen from the neighboring farms, and which constituted the more delicate portion of the feast.

Maldent was the first to recover speech. " You promised, my dear Procope," said he, " that while we were lunching you would unfold your plan. Luncheon is more than half through, at least so far as I am concerned. Begin your exposition, then ; I am listening."

" Yes, we are listening," said Frantz, with his mouth full.

"Well, then, here it is,—‘Ecce res judicanda,’ as they say at court."

"Be quiet, you Scharfensteins!" said Maldent.

"I have not said a single word," replied Frantz.

"Neither have I," said Heinrich.

"Ah! I thought I heard —"

"I thought so too," said Procope.

"Nonsense! it is probably some fox we have disturbed in its hole. Go on, Procope."

"Well, then, I repeat, here it is: there is, about a quarter of a league from here, a pretty little farm."

"You promised us a château," said Maldent.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* how particular you are!" said Procope. "Well, I will begin again. There is, a quarter of a league from here, a pretty little château."

"It makes no difference whether it is a farm or château if it only has money in it," said Heinrich Scharfenstein.

"Bravo, Heinrich, that is the way to talk! But this fellow Maldent quibbles like a lawyer. I will go on."

"Go on, then," said Frantz.

"There is, as I said before, about a quarter of a league from here, a charming country-house, occupied by the mistress alone, who has one man servant and one woman servant. It is true that the farmer and his people live close by."

"How many of them are there?" demanded Heinrich.

"About ten persons," replied Procope.

"Frantz and I will take charge of the ten persons,—eh, Frantz?"

"Yes, Uncle," replied Frantz, laconic as a Spartan.

"Well," continued Procope, "this is the plan: We will spend the day here eating, drinking, and telling stories."

"Especially eating and drinking," said Frantz.

"Then, at nightfall," continued Procope, "we will leave the cave as silently as we entered it ; we will make our way to the border of the forest ; from there we will follow an obscure road which I know as far as the foot of the wall. Once there, Frantz shall mount on his uncle's shoulders or *vice versa* ; the one who is upon the other's shoulders shall climb the wall and open the gate for us. The gate being open,—you understand, Maldent?—the gate being open,—you see, do you not, you Scharfensteins?—the gate being open, we will go in."

"Not without us, I hope," broke in, a few paces behind the group, a voice in a tone so emphatic as to make not only Procope and Maldent, but even the two giants, start.

"Treason!" cried Procope, leaping to his feet and taking a step backward.

"Treason!" cried Maldent, trying to see through the darkness, but keeping his seat.

"Treason!" exclaimed at the same time the two Scharfensteins, drawing their swords and taking a step forward.

"Ah, battle?" said the same voice; "you want to fight? Well, come on. Here, Lactance! here, Fracasso! here, Malemort!"

A triple shout from the depths of the cavern showed that those who had been called were ready to respond.

"Stop a moment, Pilletrousse," said Procope, who had recognized the voice of the fourth adventurer; "what the deuce! we are not Turks or gypsies to cut one another's throats in this fashion without trying to come to an understanding."

"Let us have a light first, one on each side; let us look into one another's eyes, that we may know with whom we have to deal; let us come to some agree-

ment if possible ; if we cannot agree, why, then we will fight."

"Let us fight first," said a hollow voice, which, coming as it did from the depths of the cavern, seemed like a voice from the infernal regions.

"Silence, Malemort !" said Pilletrousse ; "it seems to me that Procope has made a very reasonable proposition. What do you say, Lactance ? What do you think about it Fracasso ?"

"I say," replied Lactance, "that if this proposition will save the life of our brothers, I agree to it."

"It would, however, have been romantic to fight in a cavern, which might have served as a tomb for the victims ; but since it is not necessary to sacrifice material interests to poetry," Fracasso continued in a melancholy tone, "I embrace the opinion of Pilletrousse and Lactance."

"But I want to fight !" shouted Malemort.

"Come, bind up your arm and hold your tongue !" said Pilletrousse. "We are three against one ; and Procope, who is a lawyer, will tell you that three always outvote one."

Malemort roared with rage at having to give up so good a chance of receiving a new wound ; but following the advice given him by Pilletrousse, he yielded to, if he did not accept, the opinion of the majority.

Meanwhile Lactance, acting for his party, and Maldent, acting for his, had each struck a light ; and as each party had foreseen the necessity of seeing clearly, two pine torches, mounted with oakum smeared with pitch, began to burn at the same time, and their united flames illuminated the cavern and its occupants.

We have explored the former, and made the acquaintance of the latter ; there is therefore no need of describ-

ing the theatre or the actors therein ; we will only show the manner in which they were grouped.

At the back of the cavern stood Pilletrousse, Malemort, Lactance, and Fracasso. Near the entrance were the two Scharfensteins, Maldent, and Procope.

Pilletrousse still remained in advance of his party ; behind him, Malemort was clinching his fists in rage ; next to Malemort was Lactance, torch in hand, who was trying to pacify his pugnacious companion ; Fracasso, on his knees like Agis at the tomb of Leonidas, was, like him, tying the thongs of his sandals in order to be ready for war, while at the same time praying for peace.

The two Scharfensteins, as we have said, formed the advance guard of the opposite party ; close behind them stood Maldent, and behind Maldent was Procope.

The two torches lighted up all the central portion of the cavern. Only one recess near the entrance, containing a pile of brakes destined doubtless to become the bed of the future hermit if he should choose to occupy it, remained in shadow. A ray of light stealing in through the opening of the cavern, tried, but in vain, with its feeble glimmer to vie with the almost blood-red rays cast by the two torches. All this formed a sombre and martial scene which would have been wonderfully effective on the modern stage.

Our adventurers were for the most part no strangers to one another ; they had met on the field of battle, fighting against a common enemy, and were not eager to begin the game of slaughter. Utterly fearless as they were, each man found himself reviewing the situation in his own mind. But the man who had the most clear and just appreciation of what the battle would be, if it took place, was unquestionably the lawyer Procope. He therefore advanced toward his adversaries, taking

good care however to keep within reach of the two Scharfensteins.

"Gentlemen," he said, "we have by common accord wished to see one another; and it is well, because by so doing we can understand our chances. We are four against four; but we have on our side these two gentlemen," — and he pointed to Frantz and Heinrich Scharfenstein, — "so that I consider myself almost warranted in saying that we are eight against four."

The immediate consequence of this imprudent gasconade was a shout of defiance from Malemort, Lactance, and Fracasso, and a general drawing of swords.

Procope saw that he had not been as discreet as usual, and that he was on the wrong tack. He tried to retrace his steps. "Gentlemen," he said, "I do not mean to say that even with eight to four the victory would be ours, when that four consists of Pilletrousse, Malemort, Lactance, and Fracasso."

This added remark seemed to quiet them somewhat, with the exception of Malemort, who was still muttering in an undertone.

"Come to the point," said Pilletrousse.

"Yes," replied Procope, "ad eventum festina. Well, I was saying, gentlemen, that setting aside the always uncertain chances of combat, we ought to try to come to some agreement. Now, there is a sort of lawsuit pending between us, — jacens sub judice lis est; in what way shall we decide this lawsuit? In the first place, by a clear and plain statement of the situation, in which the truth will appear. Who conceived yesterday the idea of taking possession to-night of the little farm, or little château, of The Parcq, — whichever you choose to call it? These gentlemen and I. Who left Doulens this morning to put this project into execution? These gentlemen

and I. Who came into this cavern to make arrangements for the night? Again, these gentlemen and I. Finally, who matured the plan, who has unfolded it to you, and who has inspired you with the desire to join the conspiracy? Always, these gentlemen and I. Answer this, Pilletrousse, and say if the management of an enterprise does not fairly and fully belong to those who first conceived the idea and first planned to carry it into execution. *Dixi.*"

Pilletrousse burst out laughing; Fracasso shrugged his shoulders; Lactance shook his torch; Malemort murmured, "Battle!"

"What makes you laugh, Pilletrousse?" asked Procope gravely, disdaining to address the others and consenting to argue only with the one who, for the moment at least, seemed to have made himself leader of his company.

"I am laughing, my dear Procope," replied the adventurer to whom the question had been addressed, "at the profound confidence with which you state your claims,—a statement which, even admitting the force of the argument you use, instantly destroys the claim of yourself and your companions. Yes, I agree with you that the conduct of an enterprise belongs fairly and fully to those who first conceived the idea of carrying it into execution."

"Ah!" said Procope, with a triumphant air.

"Yes; but did you not say that it was yesterday that you conceived the idea of sacking the little farm, or little château, of The Parcq,—whichever you choose to call it? Well, we thought of it day before yesterday. You left Doulens this morning to put it into execution, did you? We left Montreuil-sur-Mer last night for the same purpose. You arrived at this cavern an hour ago, but we

have been here four hours. You matured this plan and unfolded it to us? We had already matured and unfolded this plan to you. You intend attacking the farm to-night? We intend attacking it this evening! We claim therefore the priority both of idea and execution, and consequently the right to conduct our undertaking without fear of molestation."

And mimicking Procope's classical manner of ending his address, "Dixi," he added, with as much assurance and solemnity as the lawyer himself.

"But," demanded Procope, somewhat disturbed by Pilletrousse's reasoning, "what assurance have I that you are telling the truth?"

"My word as a gentleman," said Pilletrousse.

"I should like something better."

"The word of a highwayman, then!"

"Hum!" said Procope, imprudently.

Their blood was up; the doubt cast upon Pilletrousse's word by Procope exasperated the three adventurers who were of his party.

"Well, then, let us fight!" exclaimed Fracasso and Lactance in one breath.

"Yes, fight, fight, fight!" shouted Malemort.

"Fight, then, if you want to!" said Procope.

"Fight, since there is no other way of settling the affair!" said Maldent.

"Fight!" repeated Frantz and Heinrich Scharfenstein, preparing to draw their heavy two-edged swords.

And as all were agreed, each man drew his sword or his dirk, took up his axe or sledge, selected his adversary, and with menace on his lips, fury in his face, and death in his hand, was about to fall upon him.

Suddenly there was a movement in the pile of brakes which were heaped up in the recess near the entrance of

the cavern. A young man elegantly dressed bounded out of the darkness into the light, extending his arms like Hersilia in the picture of "The Sabines," and exclaiming,—

"Come, put up your weapons, comrades; I take upon myself to arrange everything to the general satisfaction."

Every eye was turned upon this new-comer appearing upon the scene in such a brusque and unexpected manner, and every voice cried out, "Yvonnet!"

"Where the devil do you come from?" demanded at the same time Pilletrousse and Procope.

"You shall know presently," said Yvonnet; "but sheathe your swords and dirks first. The sight of all these naked blades irritates my nerves horribly."

All the adventurers obeyed, except Malemort.

"Come, come," said Yvonnet, addressing him, "what is all this about, comrade?"

"Ah," said Malemort, with a deep sigh, "can a poor fellow never indulge in a little fight in peace?" And he put up his sword with a gesture indicating his anger and disappointment.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ARTICLES OF PARTNERSHIP.

YVONNET cast a glance upon those about him, and seeing that if there was still fury in their hearts, at least the swords and daggers had returned to their sheaths, he turned; looked from one to the other, toward Pilletrousse and Procope, who, it will be remembered, had both done him the honor to put to him the same question.

“Where do I come from?” he repeated. “*Pardieu!* a pretty question that! I come out of that pile of brakes, where I hid when I first saw Pilletrousse, Lactance, Mallemort, and Fracasso coming in, and which I did not think it prudent to leave on seeing the arrival, later, of Procope, Maldent, and the two Scharfensteins.”

“But what were you doing in this cavern at that time of night? — for we got here before daybreak.”

“Ah, that,” replied Yvonnet, “is my secret, which I will tell you soon if you are very good; but first let us give our attention to the business which is most urgent.”

Then addressing Pilletrousse, he said, “So then, my dear Pilletrousse, you were thinking of paying a little visit to the farm or château of The Parcq, — whichever you choose to call it?”

“Yes,” said Pilletrousse.

“And you too?” Yvonnet asked of Procope.

“And we too,” replied Procope.

“And you were going to fight to establish the priority of your claims?”

"We were going to fight," said at the same time Pilletrousse and Procope.

"For shame!" said Yvonnet; "you are comrades, Frenchmen, or at all events men pledged to the cause of France."

"Well, we could not help it, since these gentlemen would not give up their purpose," said Procope.

"We could not do otherwise, since these gentlemen refused us our rights," said Pilletrousse.

"'Could not help it'! 'Could not do otherwise'!" repeated Yvonnet, imitating the voices of the two speakers. "You could not help murdering one another? You could not do otherwise than cut one another's throats? And you were there, Lactance, and saw these preparations for bloodshed, and your Christian soul did not groan?"

"Yes," said Lactance, "it did groan, and profoundly!"

"And is that all with which your holy religion has inspired you,—a groan?"

"After the combat," replied Lactance, somewhat humiliated by the reproaches of Yvonnet, the justice of which he admitted to himself,—"after the combat I should have prayed for the dead."

"Just hear that!"

"What would you have had me do, my dear Monsieur Yvonnet?"

"Eh, *pardieu!* do as I do, who am not a devotee, a saint, a prodigal in paternosters as you are. What would I have had you do? I would have had you throw yourself in among the blades and the swords,—*inter gladios et enses*, to speak after the fashion of our lawyer Procope,—and I would have had you say to your erring brothers, with that air of compunction which suits you so well, what I am going to say to them myself: Comrades, where

there is anything for four there is also something for eight ; if the first transaction does not prove to be all that we expect, we will try another. Men are born to help one another over the rough paths of life, and not to place obstacles in the way already so difficult to travel. Instead of separating, let us combine ; four cannot attempt without enormous risks that which eight can accomplish almost without danger. Let us keep our hatred, our daggers, our swords, for our enemies, reserving for one another only kind words and good actions. God, who protects France when he has nothing more pressing to do, will smile upon our fraternity and will send its reward. This is what you should have said, dear Lactance, and what you did not say."

"That is true," replied Lactance, beating his breast ; "mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa." And extinguishing his torch, which was no longer needed, he fell on his knees and began to pray with fervor.

"Well, then, I say it for you," continued Yvonnet ; "and I add also that it is I who bring you, Comrades, the divine recompense which Lactance would have promised you."

"You, Yvonnet," said Procope, in a doubtful tone.

"Yes, I, who had conceived this very idea before any of you."

"What !" said Pilletrousse, "you too conceived the idea of getting into this château which we are all after ?"

"Not only have I thought of the plan," said Yvonnet, "but I have even carried it into execution."

"Nonsense !" cried all the listeners, paying renewed attention to what Yvonnet was saying.

"Yes, I have an acquaintance in the place," replied the latter, — "a charming little soubrette named Gertrude," he added, stroking his mustache, "who is quite ready to

leave for me father and mother, master and mistress, — a soul which I am leading on."

Lactance sighed.

" You say that you have been in the château ? "

" I came from there last night. You know how I dislike being out alone in the dark ; well, rather than walk three leagues to Doulens, or six leagues to Abbeville or Montreuil-sur-Mer, I preferred coming a quarter of a league to this cavern, which I remembered from having held here my first rendezvous with my sweetheart. I groped about until I found this pile of brakes, the position of which I knew ; and I was just going to sleep, intending in the morning to propose the affair to those of you whom I should meet first, when Pilletrousse arrived with his party ; and later, Procope came with his. Each party came for the same purpose. This tendency toward the same end has caused the discussion which you know was about to end in a tragic manner when I thought it time to interfere, and did interfere. Now I say to you : Instead of fighting, will you form a partnership ? Will you enter by stratagem instead of by force ? Will you have the doors opened to you instead of breaking them in ? Instead of taking your chances of finding the money and the jewels, would you prefer to have the plunder shown to you ? If so, give me your hand, — I am your man ; and as a sign of disinterestedness and brotherly feeling, notwithstanding the service I am about to render you, I will share with you equally. Now, if any one has anything better to propose, I am ready to listen to what he has to say."

A murmur of admiration ran through the assembly. Lactance, stopping short in his prayers, drew near to Yvonnet and humbly kissed the hem of his garment. Procope, Pilletrousse, Maldent, and Fracasso pressed his

hand. The two Scharfensteins almost stifled him with their embraces. Malemort alone grumbled from his corner, "There will not be a single bit of fighting, curse it ! "

"Well, then," said Yvonnet, who had for some time desired some such association, and who seeing the goddess of fortune passing within reach of his hand, did not wish to miss this opportunity of seizing her by the forelock, "do not let us lose a moment. Here we are, re-united, — nine comrades, who fear neither God nor the devil — "

"Indeed !" interrupted Lactance, making the sign of the cross, "we fear God."

"True, true, — only a mode of expression, Lactance. I was saying, then, that we were nine associates united by chance — "

"By Providence, Yvonnet," said Lactance.

"By Providence, then. Fortunately we have among us Procope, a lawyer ; fortunately this lawyer has about him pen and ink, and, I am very sure, some paper bearing the stamp of our good king Henri II."

"Upon my word, I have," said Procope ; "and as Yvonnet says, it is lucky."

"Then make haste ; let us arrange a table and draw up our articles of partnership, while one of us stands guard in the forest near the entrance of the cavern, to see that we are not disturbed."

"I," said Malemort, "will mount guard, and for every Spaniard, Englishman, or German prowling about the forest there will be one slain ! "

"But," said Yvonnet, "that is just what we do not want, my dear Malemort. In our position, that is to say, not far from the camp of his Majesty the Emperor Charles V., with a man in command of the quick hearing and practised eye of Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy, we

must kill only when it is necessary, because, however sure one may be of his blows, they sometimes wound instead of killing ; the wounded scream like eagles, their cries attract attention, and, the forest once occupied, God knows what might happen to us. No, dear Malemort, you must stay here, and one of the two Scharfensteins shall mount guard. Both are Germans ; if the one who is on guard is discovered, he can pass himself off as a foot-soldier of the Duc d'Aremberg or as a cavalry-man of Count Waldeck."

"Count Waldeck would be best," said Heinrich Scharfeinstein.

"This giant is full of intelligence," said Yvonnet. "Yes, my brave fellow, 'Count Waldeck would be best,' because Count Waldeck is a marauder. Is not that what you mean ? "

"Yes, that is what I mean."

"And it would not be surprising if a marauder were hid in the forest ? "

"No, not at all surprising."

"But the Scharfenstein who shall be on guard must take care, with this honorable title of marauder, not to fall into the hands of Monseigneur le Duc de Savoie. He does n't understand how to jest on the subject of marauding."

"Faith," said Heinrich, "he had two more soldiers hanged yesterday."

"Three," said Frantz.

"Well, which of you two will mount guard ? "

"I," replied the uncle and nephew together.

"My friends," said Yvonnet, "this devotion is appreciated by your comrades ; but one sentinel is enough. Draw lots therefore. A post of honor is reserved for him who shall remain here."

The two Scharfensteins consulted together a moment.

"Frantz has quick ears and keen eyes ; he will stand sentinel for you," said Heinrich.

"Very well," said Yvonnet ; "go to your post, Frantz."

Frantz directed his steps toward the mouth of the cavern with his usual gravity.

"Understand, Frantz," said Yvonnet, "that if you are captured by any one else, it is of no consequence ; but if you are captured by the Duke of Savoy you will be hanged."

"Don't you fear that I shall let anybody take me," said Frantz. And he went out of the cavern to go to his post.

"And where is the post of honor you promised ?" demanded Heinrich.

Yvonnet took the torch from Maldent, and giving it to Heinrich said, "Stand here, hold the light for Procope, and do not stir."

"I will not stir," said Heinrich.

Procope sat down, drew the paper from his pocket, his inkstand from his belt, and his pens from his inkstand. We saw him at work when we first entered the cavern of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, ordinarily so solitary, and by a concurrence of strange circumstances so frequented to-day.

We have shown that the task at which Procope was hard at work from eleven o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon on the important day of the 5th of May, 1555, was no easy matter to accomplish to everybody's satisfaction.

Each one had, according to his interest or his insight, offered his amendments and his second amendments, as if it had been the discussion of a bill in a modern delib-

erative assembly. These amendments and second amendments had been acted on by a majority vote, and it must be said to the credit of our adventurers that they had shown in this discussion much fairness, self-restraint, and impartiality.

There are some cross-grained people, bold calumniators of judges and justice, who pretend to think that a code of laws drawn up by robbers, would be much more complete and especially much more equitable than one drawn up by honest men. We pity these unfortunate persons for their blindness, just as we pity the Calvinists and the Lutherans for their errors ; and we pray God to pardon them all.

At the moment when Yvonnet's watch — for rare as such trinkets were at this period, this fop of an adventurer had managed to procure a watch — pointed to a quarter after three, Procope lifted his head, laid down his pen, took the paper in his hands, and regarding it with an air of satisfaction, uttered an exclamation of pleasure. "Ah," he said, "I think it is finished, and not badly done. *Exegi monumentum !*"

At this announcement Heinrich Scharfenstein, who had been holding the torch for three hours and twenty minutes, began to stretch his arms, which were getting very tired. Yvonnet stopped singing, but kept on stroking his mustache ; Malemort finished the dressing of his left arm, and fastened the bandage with a pin ; Lactance muttered a final *Ave* ; Maldent, who had been leaning upon the table, straightened up ; Pilletrousse sheathed his now sufficiently sharp dagger, and Fracasso emerged from his poetic reverie with the satisfaction of having given the final touch to a sonnet on which he had been meditating for more than a month.

All approached the table except Frantz, who, leaving

his uncle in charge of their common interests, had taken his position as sentinel about twenty steps from the entrance to the cavern, with the firm resolution not only to defend his companions against intrusion but to defend himself against capture by any one, especially by Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy, the rough dispenser of justice.

"Gentlemen," said Procope, looking round with satisfaction upon the circle formed about him,—a circle even more regular than that ordinarily gathered about an officer mustering his soldiers,—"gentlemen, is every one here?"

"Yes," answered the adventurers in chorus.

"Is everybody," continued Procope, "ready to listen to the reading of the eighteen articles of the document which we have drawn up conjointly, and which might be called articles of partnership? For, in fact, we are forming a sort of company."

The answer was affirmative and general,—Heinrich Scharfenstein answering, it was understood, for himself and nephew.

"Listen, then," said Procope. And after coughing and spitting he began: "We the undersigned—"

"Pardon," interrupted Lactance, "I do not know how to sign."

"*Parbleu!*" said Procope, "that is a pretty piece of business! You will have to make the sign of the cross."

"Ah," murmured Lactance, "my engagement will be the more sacred."

Procope continued: "We the undersigned, Jean-Chrysostome Procope —"

"You don't stand on ceremony!" said Yvonnet; "you have put your own name first!"

"Somebody had to be first," said Procope, innocently.

"All right!" said Maldent, "go on."

Procope resumed : "Jean-Chrysostome Procope, ex-solicitor at the bar of Caen, also of Rouen, Cherbourg, Valognes—"

"*Corbleu!*!" said Pilletrousse, "I am not surprised that it took you three hours and a half to write the document, if you have given to each one, as you have given to yourself, his rank and titles. On the contrary, I am surprised that it is finished so soon."

"No," said Procope, "I have included you all under one title, and I have assigned to each of you a single and unique profession ; but I thought that in regard to myself, the author of the document, a statement of my titles and rank was not only suitable, but absolutely necessary."

"That is right," said Pilletrousse.

"Go on!" shouted Malemort. "We shall never get through if we are interrupted at every word. I am in a hurry to fight."

"Well," said Procope, "I am not the one who is interrupting you, it strikes me ;" and he continued : "We the undersigned, Jean-Chrysostome Procope, etc., Honoré-Joseph Maldent, Victor-Felix Yvonnet, Cyrille-Nepomucène Lactance, César-Annibal Malemort, Martin Pilletrousse, Vittorio-Albani Fracasso, and Heinrich and Frantz Scharfenstein,—all captains in the service of King Henri II.—"

A murmur of applause interrupted Procope, and no one thought of disputing with him the titles and rank he had assigned them, so occupied was each in the adjustment of his cravat, bandage, handkerchief, or rags,—symbols of their new rank as captains of the French army.

Procope waited until the murmur of applause had subsided, then went on, — “have agreed as follows —”

“Pardon,” said Maldent, “but the deed is null.”

“How null?” said Procope.

“You have forgotten one thing in making your deed.”

“What is that?”

“The date.”

“The date is at the end.”

“Ah,” said Maldent, “that is another thing. However, it would have been better to put it at the beginning.”

“It makes no difference whether it is at the beginning or the end,” said Procope. “The Institutes of Justinian say positively : ‘Omne actum quo tempore scriptum sit, indicato ; seu initio, seu fine, ut paciscentibus libuerit.’ That is to say, — ‘Every agreement must be dated ; but the contracting parties may place the date at the end or at the beginning of said agreement.’ ”

“How abominable is this language of the law,” said Fracasso ; “and what a difference there is between this Latin and that of Virgil and Horace !” And he began to scan in a sentimental manner these lines from the Third Eclogue of Virgil, —

“Malo me Galatea petit, lasciva puella,
Et fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri —”

“Silence, Fracasso !” said Procope.

“Silence, if you wish it,” replied Fracasso ; “but it is no less true that, however great an emperor Justinian may be, I prefer the second Homer, and I would rather have written the Bucolics, the Eclogues, and even the *Aeneid*, than the ‘Digest,’ the ‘Pandects,’ the ‘Institutes,’ and the whole ‘Corpus juris civilis.’ ”

Fracasso and Procope were doubtless about to enter

into a discussion of this important question, — and God knows where it would have led the disputants! — when a stifled cry was heard outside the cavern, which turned the attention of the adventurers into a new channel.

Suddenly the daylight was intercepted by some opaque body, which came between the artificial and ephemeral light of the torch and the divine and inextinguishable light of the sun. Finally, a creature, the species of which it was impossible to distinguish, so many vague forms it seemed to assume in the dim light, advanced to the centre of the circle, which opened spontaneously before it.

Then by the light of the torch which shone upon the amorphous mass, the astonished men recognized Frantz Scharfenstein holding in his arms a woman, over whose mouth he had placed his large hand as a gag. Every one awaited an explanation of this fresh incident.

“Comrades,” said the giant, “here is a little woman who was prowling around near the entrance to the cavern; I caught her and brought her in, — what shall be done with her?”

“*Pardieu!*” said Pilletrousse, “let her go. She will not eat the nine of us, probably.”

“Oh, I am not afraid of her eating the nine of us,” said Frantz, with a coarse laugh; “I would first eat her myself all alone. That I would!”

And right in the middle of the circle he set the woman down upon her feet, as Pilletrousse had ordered, and quickly withdrew into the background.

The woman, who was young and pretty, and who by her dress appeared to belong to the estimable class of cooks who serve in good families, cast about her a frightened glance, as if to see what sort of company she had fallen among, and at first sight she was somewhat alarmed. But before her glance had taken in the whole of the scene

before her, it had fastened upon the youngest and most elegant of our adventurers. "Oh, Monsieur Yvonnet," she cried, "for heaven's sake, protect me ! defend me !" And she threw herself trembling into his arms.

"Why!" said Yvonnet, "it is Mademoiselle Gertrude!" And holding her to his breast to reassure her, he said: "*Pardieu!* gentlemen, we shall have the latest news from The Parcq now, for this pretty child comes from there."

Now, as the news which Yvonnet promised through Gertrude was of the greatest interest to everybody, our adventurers, abandoning, for a time at least, the reading of their articles of partnership, grouped themselves about the two young persons, and waited impatiently until Mademoiselle Gertrude's composure should be sufficiently restored to allow her to speak.

CHAPTER V.

COUNT WALDECK.

IT was some minutes before Yvonnet could pacify Mademoiselle Gertrude sufficiently to enable her to relate the cause of her sudden appearance ; and even then the narrative was so broken and so much interrupted by questions on the part of her hearers, that, with the reader's permission, we will substitute our own language for that of the young lady, and relate, as truthfully as we can, the tragic events which had driven her from The Parcq, and brought her among our adventurers.

Two hours after the departure of Yvonnet, just as Mademoiselle Gertrude — doubtless somewhat fatigued after the visit of the handsome Parisian the previous evening — was deciding that it was time to get up and go down to her mistress, who had already called her two or three times, the farmer's son, a lad sixteen or seventeen years of age, named Philippin, came rushing into the chamber of the lady of the house trembling all over with fright, and announced to her that a troop of from forty to fifty horsemen, who appeared from their yellow and black scarfs to belong to the army of the Emperor Charles V., were approaching the château, bringing with them his father, whom they had taken prisoner while he was at work in the fields.

Philippin, who had himself been working at a little distance from his father, had seen the captain of the company seize upon him, and had divined, from the ges-

tures of the soldiers and of their prisoner, that they were talking about the château. He then threw himself on the ground and crept along until he came to a lonely path, where, seeing that the lay of the land would conceal his flight, he started up and ran as fast as his legs would carry him to announce to his mistress what had happened, and give her time to make some plan.

The mistress of the château arose, went to the window, and saw that the band was scarcely a hundred steps distant ; it consisted of fifty men, as Philippin had said, and seemed to be commanded by three leaders. By the side of one of the leaders walked the farmer, his hands tied behind him ; the officer by whose side he walked, had hold of the end of the cord, doubtless to prevent the farmer from trying to escape, or to prevent his flight in case he should make the attempt.

This sight was not reassuring. However, as the cavaliers who were coming to visit the château wore, as we have said, the colors of the Empire ; as the helmets of the three leaders were surmounted with coronets, and their breastplates were engraved with coats-of-arms ; as the Duke Emmanuel Philibert had issued the most stringent orders against all pillage and marauding ; and moreover, as being a woman, she had no means of flight, the mistress of the house determined to receive the newcomers in her best possible manner. Accordingly she left her chamber, and descending the stairs went, as a special mark of respect, to welcome them at the door.

As for Mademoiselle Gertrude, her terror at the sight of these men was so great that instead of following her mistress, as she ought to have done perhaps, she clung to Philippin, beseeching him in the most piteous tones to find her some place where she might hide until the soldiers had taken their departure, and where he—

Philippin — could come from time to time to give her news of her mistress's affairs, which seemed to her to be in a pretty bad condition.

Although Mademoiselle Gertrude had treated Philippin badly for some time past, and although the latter — who could not understand the reason for this sudden change of manner toward him — had determined to have nothing to do with her even if she should need his services, she was so pretty in her terror, so charming in her entreaties, that Philippin yielded, and led her by a private stairway into the courtyard, and thence into the garden, where he hid her in a corner of a well-house in which his father and he were accustomed to keep the garden-tools.

It was not likely that the soldiers, who evidently intended to occupy the château, its pantries, and its cellars, would trouble themselves about a place where, as Philippin facetiously remarked, there was nothing to drink but water.

Mademoiselle Gertrude would have been glad to keep Philippin with her, and perhaps, on his part, Philippin would have liked nothing better than to stay with Mademoiselle Gertrude ; but the pretty girl was even more curious than frightened, — so that her desire for news overcame her fear of remaining alone.

For greater security Philippin locked the door and put the key in his pocket, which at first alarmed Mademoiselle Gertrude, but from which, on reflection, she was able to derive consolation.

Mademoiselle Gertrude held her breath and listened intently ; she heard at first a great clanking of arms and neighing of horses and the loud voices of the troopers ; but as Philippin had foreseen, these sounds seemed to centre in the château and its courtyard.

The prisoner was bursting with impatience and burning with curiosity. More than once she went to the door and tried to open it. If she had succeeded, she would certainly have tried, at the risk of any difficulty which she might meet in such an undertaking, to hear what was said by listening at the doors, and to see what was going on by looking over the walls.

At last a step, light as that of those animals that prowl by night around poultry-yards and sheep-folds, came toward the well-house; a key, cautiously inserted, grated in the lock, and the door opened slowly, and then closed quickly after admitting Master Philippin.

"Well, what are they doing?" asked Gertrude, even before the door was shut.

"Well, Mademoiselle," said Philippin, "it appears that they are really gentlemen, as Madame la Baronne said; but such gentlemen, *bon Dieu!* if you should hear them curse and swear, you would think they were veritable Pagans."

"*Mon Dieu!* what are you saying, Monsieur Philippin?" cried the young girl, trembling with fear.

"The truth, Mademoiselle Gertrude,—God's own truth! Why, when the chaplain wished to make some remarks to them, they answered that if he did not keep still, they would make him say Mass, hanging head downward from the bell-rope, while their own chaplain, a bully with beard and mustaches, should follow him in the prayer-book, so that not a single question or response should be omitted."

"Why, then," said Mademoiselle Gertrude, "they are not real gentlemen."

"Oh, yes, *pardieu!* they are of the very highest rank in Germany. They were not ashamed to give their names,—a piece of impudence, you will agree, after

conducting themselves in that way. The oldest, who is a man of about fifty years, is Count Waldeck, and commands four thousand cavalry in the army of his Majesty Charles V. Of the two others, — who may be, the first from twenty-four to twenty-five years of age, and the second from nineteen to twenty, — one is his legitimate son, and the other his bastard son. But from the little I have seen, I think he likes the bastard better than the other, — a very common thing. The legitimate son is a handsome fellow, of pale complexion, with large brown eyes, black hair and mustaches, and it is my opinion that he could be made to listen to reason. But the other is very different ; he is red, and has eyes like a wild-cat. Oh, Mademoiselle Gertrude, he is a veritable demon ! God keep you from meeting him ! He looks at Madame la Baronne — oh, it is enough to make one shudder ! ”

“ Ah, really ? ” said Mademoiselle, who was evidently curious to know what such a look was like.

“ Oh, *mon Dieu !* yes,” said Philippin, by way of peroration, “ and there I left them. Now I will go to learn more news, which I will bring back to you.”

“ Yes, yes, go,” said Gertrude, “ and come back soon ; but take good care that you don’t get hurt.”

“ Oh, don’t be alarmed, Mademoiselle ! ” replied Philippin. “ I never appear except with a bottle in each hand ; and as I know where the good wine is, the brigands are full of consideration for me.”

Philippin went out, and shut in Mademoiselle Gertrude, who immediately began to wonder what sort of eyes those could be whose glance was enough to make one shudder. She had not solved this question satisfactorily although she had been meditating upon it for nearly an hour, when the key again turned in the lock, and the messenger reappeared.

He came not, however, like the dove to the ark, and he was very far from holding an olive-branch in his hand. Count Waldeck and his sons, by means of threats and even of violence, had forced the baroness to give up her jewels, her plate, and all the money she had in the château. But this was not sufficient for them ; and this first ransom having been paid, the poor woman, just as she believed herself to be free from the noble bandits who had demanded her hospitality, had on the contrary been seized, bound to the foot of her bed, and shut up in her chamber, with the assurance that in two hours the château would be set on fire if within that time she had not found, either in her own purse or in that of her friends, two hundred rose-crowns.

Mademoiselle Gertrude mourned very properly the fate of her mistress ; but as she had not two hundred crowns to lend her to relieve her from her embarrassment, she strove to think of something else, and asked Philippin what that hateful bastard of Waldeck's with the red hair and terrible eyes was doing.

Philippin answered that that bastard of Waldeck's was getting drunk,—an occupation in which he was helped mightily by his father. The viscount alone kept his self-possession,—as much as was possible in the midst of pillage and orgy.

Mademoiselle Gertrude had a fierce desire to see with her own eyes what an orgy was. As for pillage she knew all about that, having seen it at Thérouanne ; but of an orgy, she had not the slightest conception.

Philippin explained to her that it was a meeting of men who drank, ate, used bad language, and insulted in different ways every woman who came within their reach.

Mademoiselle Gertrude's curiosity was redoubled by this description, which would have made a stouter heart

than hers tremble with fear. She begged Philippin to let her go out, if only for ten minutes ; but he told her so many times and so earnestly that she would risk her life by going out, that she decided to remain in concealment, and to wait until Philippin's next visit before coming to a definite decision.

This decision was made before Philippin's return. In spite of everything, she would force a passage, reach the château, slip in through the secret corridors and by the secret stairways, and see with her own eyes what was going on, since a narration, however eloquent it may be, never does justice to the scene it is intended to portray. So, when she heard for the third time the key turn in the lock, she made ready to rush out of the well-house, even against the advice of Philippin ; but when she saw the young man she recoiled in terror.

Philippin was as pale as death ; his words were incoherent, and his eyes wore the haggard expression of one who has just witnessed some terrible scene.

Gertrude wished to question him, but at the sight of his horror-stricken countenance she turned suddenly cold ; the paleness of Philippin's face was reflected on her own, and in presence of that frightful silence she could not utter a sound.

The young man gave no explanation, but with that strength of despair which one never even tries to resist, seized her by the wrist and dragged her toward the little gate of the garden which opened into the plain, stammering out these words only, —

“ Dead — murdered — stabbed ! ”

Gertrude allowed herself to be led. Philippin left her for a moment to close the garden-gate behind them, — a useless precaution, since no one thought of pursuing them. But the shock to Philippin had been so severe

that the poor fellow's excited movements could not be checked until his strength should wholly fail ; and his strength failed when they had gone about five hundred steps from the gate. He fell breathless, murmuring with a hoarse voice, like that of a man in agony, those terrible words, — the only words he had been able to speak, —

“ Dead — murdered — stabbed ! ”

Then Gertrude looked about her, and saw that she was only about a hundred yards from the forest. She was well acquainted with that forest, and she knew the way to the cavern. The forest and the cavern would be for her a twofold refuge ; and besides, in the latter she might find Yvonnet. She was reluctant to abandon Philippin, who had fainted by the side of the ditch ; but she saw approaching four or five horsemen who might belong to the cavalry of Count Waldeck. She had not a second to lose if she would escape. She darted toward the forest, and without looking behind, ran without stopping, distracted with terror, her hair flying, until she reached the edge of the woods, where she leaned against a tree for support and took a survey of the open country before her.

The five or six cavaliers had stopped at the place where Philippin had fainted. They had lifted him up ; but seeing that it was impossible for him to take a step, one of them had placed him on the saddle, before him, and followed by his companions, had started for the camp.

Now these men appeared to have only good intentions, and Gertrude concluded that nothing better could happen to poor Philippin than to fall into the hands of men who seemed so kind.

Then, reassured as to her companion, and having somewhat recovered her breath while resting, Gertrude turned her steps toward the cavern, or rather in the direction in

which she supposed the cavern to lie; for her flight had so confused her that the signs by which she was accustomed to recognize the path were passed unnoticed by her. She wandered about, therefore, until, accidentally or by instinct, she found herself in the vicinity of the cavern and within arm's length of Frantz Scharfenstein.

The rest may be easily imagined; Frantz threw one arm around Gertrude's waist, clapped a hand over her mouth, and taking her up as if she had been a feather, entered the cavern and deposited the frightened girl in the midst of the circle of adventurers, to whom, reassured by the kind words of Yvonnet, she related the events we have just described, and who received her story with a general howl of indignation.

But it must not be supposed that the feeling which caused this indignation was not a thoroughly selfish one. The adventurers were not indignant at the lack of morality shown by the pillagers with regard to the Château du Parcq and its occupants. No, they were indignant that Count Waldeck and his sons had pillaged in the morning a château which they had counted on pillaging at night.

The result of this feeling of indignation was a general clamor followed by a unanimous resolution to sally out and see what was going on, both in the vicinity of the camp where Philippin had been carried and in the direction of the Château du Parcq, the scene of the events which Gertrude had narrated with the eloquence and energy inspired by terror.

But the adventurers' indignation did not overcome their prudence; it was decided that some one of them should explore the forest and report the state of things to the rest on his return, when, according as they saw grounds for fear or for confidence, they would determine on their course of action.

Yvonnet offered his services to beat up the forest, for which indeed he was well fitted ; he knew all the hidden paths, and was as agile as a deer and as wary as a fox.

Gertrude screamed, and tried to prevent her lover from undertaking so dangerous a mission ; but she was given to understand in a few words that she had chosen a bad time for sentimental utterances, which would not be appreciated by the rather practical society in which she found herself. She was really a girl of good sense ; she became calm when she saw that her screams and tears not only would avail nothing, but would work to her disadvantage. Besides, Yvonnet explained to her in a low tone that the mistress of an adventurer should not affect the nervous sensibility of a princess of romance ; and leaving her in the care of his friend Fracasso and under the special protection of the two Scharfensteins, he left the cavern to accomplish the important mission which he had taken upon himself.

In ten minutes he came back. He reported that the forest was entirely deserted, and that there were no signs of danger.

As the curiosity of the adventurers was almost as much aroused in their cavern by Mademoiselle Gertrude's story as Mademoiselle Gertrude's curiosity had been excited by the story of Philippin, and as old campaigners of their stamp could not have the same reasons for prudence which govern the actions of a pretty and timid young girl, they went out from the cavern, leaving Procope's articles of partnership in the care of the spirits of the earth, invited Yvonnet to lead them, and guided by him, took their way toward the borders of the forest, each one making sure that his dirk or his sword had not rusted in its sheath.

CHAPTER VI.

THE JUSTICIARY.

As our adventurers advanced toward that place where the forest stretched itself out into a point within a quarter of a league of Hesdin, separating the two valleys of the tract of open country already known to our readers, they passed from the comparatively open spaces among the tall trees, into a thick undergrowth, which with its thousands of interlacing stems, bound together by the rich luxuriance of the wild creepers, completely hid them as they glided cautiously through its shade. In this way the little band reached the outskirts of the forest without being seen. They paused at a short distance from the ditch which separated the forest from the open country. This ditch bordered the road to which we drew the reader's attention in the first chapter of this book, as forming a line of communication between the Château du Parcq, the emperor's camp, and the neighboring villages.

The spot was well suited for a halt; an immense oak, which had been left, with some others of the same species and the same height, to show what giants had formerly fallen under the axe, spread above their heads its leafy dome, while, by advancing a step or two, they could overlook the whole plain without being seen themselves.

All eyes were lifted instinctively to the rich vegetation of the venerable tree. Yvonnet understood what was expected of him; he nodded consent, borrowed Fracasso's note-book, which had only one unoccupied leaf remaining,

— which the poet pointed out to him, recommending him to respect the others, which contained his pensive lucubrations. He placed one of the two Scharfensteins against the rough column which was too large for him to encircle with his arms, mounted upon the folded hands of the giant, climbed from his hands to his shoulders, from his shoulders to the lower branches of the tree, and in a moment was seated astride one of the strong branches with the carelessness and security of a sailor on a vessel's yard or bowsprit.

Gertrude had watched this ascent anxiously; but she had already learned to keep her fears to herself and restrain her cries. Besides, seeing the graceful composure with which Yvonnet kept his seat upon the branches, the ease with which he turned his head from right to left, she felt that except for one of those dizzy turns to which he was subject, there was no danger for her lover.

Yvonnet, shading his eyes with his hand, looking first to the north and then to the south, appeared to divide his attention between two equally interesting spectacles.

These continued movements of the head aroused the curiosity of the adventurers, who, down in the thick undergrowth, could see nothing of that which offered itself to Yvonnet's view from the elevated region where he had established himself.

Yvonnet understood this impatience, of which moreover they gave indications by lifting up their heads, questioning him with their eyes, and even by venturing to call to him in suppressed tones, "What do you see?" Among these questioners with gesture and voice — let us do her this justice — Mademoiselle Gertrude was not the least eager.

Yvonnet gave his companions to understand by a motion of his hand that in a few moments they should know as much as he. He opened Fracasso's note-book, tore out the blank leaf, wrote upon it some lines in pencil, rolled up the paper in his fingers, so that it should not blow away, and dropped it. Every hand was extended to receive it, even the white and pretty hands of Mademoiselle Gertrude ; but it was into the big battle-doors of Frantz Scharfenstein that the paper fell.

The giant laughed at his good luck, and passing the paper to his neighbor, said, "The honor belongs to you, Monsieur Procope ; I do not know how to read French."

Procope, no less eager than the others to know what was going on, unfolded the paper and read the following lines : —

"The Château du Parcq is on fire. Count Waldeck, his two sons, and his band of cavalry are returning along the road which leads from the château to the camp. They are about two hundred steps from the point of forest where we are concealed. In the other direction there is a small party coming from the camp toward the château. This party consists of seven men,—an officer, a squire, a page, and four soldiers. As well as I can judge from here, the officer is Duke Emmanuel Philibert. His party is at about the same distance from us on our left, as Count Waldeck's on our right. If the two parties march with equal step, they must meet at the point of the forest and find themselves face to face when they least expect it. If Duke Emmanuel has been informed, as is probable, by Monsieur Philippin of what took place at the château, we shall see something interesting. Attention, comrades ! it really is the duke."

Yvonnet's note ended here ; but it would have been difficult to say more in so few words, and to promise with more conciseness a spectacle which indeed would be of

the greatest interest if the adventurer was not mistaken in the identity and intentions of the parties.

So each of the associates approached cautiously the edge of the forest, in order to witness as comfortably as possible and without danger the spectacle promised by Yvonnet, to whom chance had assigned the best point of view.

If the reader will follow our adventurers' example, we will not trouble ourselves about Count Waldeck and his sons, whom we already know through Mademoiselle Gertrude's story ; but we too, stealing along by the left edge of the forest, will put ourselves in communication with the new-comer announced by Yvonnet, and who is no less a personage than the hero of our story.

Yvonnet was not mistaken. The officer who advanced between his page and his squire, followed, as if he were making his ordinary daily patrol, by a little band of four horsemen, was indeed Duke Emmanuel Philibert, general-in-chief of the army of the Emperor Charles V. in the Netherlands.

It was easy to recognize him from his custom of carrying his helmet suspended to the side of the saddle instead of wearing it on his head. This he did almost constantly, in sunshine and in rain, and even sometimes during battle ; from which remarkable insensibility to cold, heat, and blows, his soldiers had given him the surname, *Tête de Fer*.

He was, at the period of which we write, a handsome young man twenty-seven years of age ; he had a slight but well-knit figure, with hair cut very short, with high forehead, brown eyebrows clearly marked, blue eyes bright and keen, straight nose, heavy mustaches, a beard trimmed to a point, and, finally, a rather thick-set neck, as is often the case with those who are born of war-

like races, and whose ancestors have worn a helmet for several generations.

When he spoke, his voice was infinitely sweet and at the same time remarkably firm. It could express, strange to say, the most violent menace without rising more than one or two tones ; the ascending scale of anger was hidden in an almost indiscernible shading of accent.

The result was that only those persons who knew him intimately could understand to what perils those were exposed who were imprudent enough to arouse and brave this anger, — an anger so well repressed that its violence could be perceived and its scope measured only at the moment when with an explosion, preceded by the lightning of his eyes, it burst forth in its might, destructive as the thunderbolt ; then, just as when the thunderbolt has struck the storm subsides and the weather becomes clear, so when the paroxysm has passed the countenance of the duke resumes its calmness and habitual serenity, to his eyes return their pleasant and firm expression, his mouth recovers its beneficent and royal smile.

The squire who rode on his right hand and who wore his visor up, was a young man of fair complexion, of about the same age as the duke, and of precisely the same height. His clear blue eyes, full of power and pride ; his beard and mustaches of a warmer tint than that of his flaxen hair ; his nostrils dilated like those of a lion ; his lips whose ripe fulness the hair which covered them could not conceal ; his complexion, rich both with the burning of the sun and with the glow of health, — all betokened the perfection of his physical condition.

Not hanging by his side, but swinging upon his back, clanked one of those terrible two-handed swords, three of which François I. broke at Marignano, and which on

account of their length could be carried only over the shoulder, while upon the bow of his saddle hung one of those battle-axes which had an edge on one side, a head on the other, and at the end a triangular spike ; so that with this single weapon, one could, as occasion demanded, cleave as with an axe, fell as with a hammer, or stab as with a dagger.

On the left of the duke rode his page. He was a handsome youth barely sixteen or eighteen years of age, with hair which looked blue from its very blackness, cut *à l'Allemande* like that of Holbein's cavaliers and Raphael's angels. His eyes, shaded by long, velvety eyelashes, were of an indescribable shade between chestnut and violet, which is rarely met with except in Arabs or Sicilians. His complexion, of that peculiar paleness found in the northern districts of the Italian peninsula, resembled the whiteness of a piece of Carrara marble from which the Roman sun has long and lovingly absorbed the color. His hands, small and white with tapering fingers, managed with remarkable skill an Arabian pony, his only saddle being a covering made of leopard's skin with eyes of enamel and teeth and paws of gold, and his only bridle a silken cord. His dress, simple but elegant, consisted of a black velvet tunic, opening just enough to show a cherry-colored vest slashed with white satin, drawn in at the waist by a gold cord, to which hung a dagger whose handle was made from a single agate. His feet, gracefully modelled, were enclosed in morocco boots which reached to the knee, and at that height were entered by breeches of velvet similar to that of which the tunic was made. Lastly, his head was covered by a cap of the same material and color as the rest of his outside dress, and around it, fastened in front by a diamond clasp, wound a red plume, the end of which, moving with

the least breath of air, drooped gracefully between his shoulders.

And now, our new characters having been described and placed upon the stage, we return to the dramatic development, interrupted for a moment, which is about to exhibit even more vigorous and decided action than has yet been displayed.

Emmanuel Philibert, his two companions, and the four men who followed in his train continued on their way, without either hastening or restraining the movement of their horses. But as they drew near to the point of the forest the duke's face became more serious, as if in anticipation he viewed the scene of desolation which would meet his eyes when once he had turned that point. Suddenly the two troops, coming at the same moment to the apex of the angle, found themselves face to face ; and, strange to say, it was the more numerous party which came to a pause, held to its place by force of surprise, in which some fear also was clearly apparent.

Emmanuel Philibert, on the other hand, without indicating by any agitation of his person, gesture of his hand, or expression of his face, the sentiment, whatever it might be, by which he was animated, continued on his way straight to Count Waldeck, who, with a son on either side, awaited his approach.

At a distance of ten paces from the count, Emmanuel made a sign to his squire, his page, and his four soldiers, who stopped at once with military promptness and regularity, leaving the duke to advance alone.

When he had come within arm's length of Viscount Waldeck, who meanwhile had placed himself as a rampart between the duke and his father, Emmanuel in his turn came to a pause.

The three gentlemen saluted by raising each a hand to

his helmet ; but the bastard Waldeck, in raising his hand to his, lowered his visor as if to be prepared for whatever might happen.

The duke responded to the triple salute by an inclination of his uncovered head. Then, addressing Viscount Waldeck with that gentle voice which made his utterances musical, —

“ Monsieur le Vicomte de Waldeck,” said he, “ you are a brave and honorable gentleman, — one of those whom I like, and who are liked by my august master the Emperor Charles V. I have had for a long time the intention to do something for you ; within the last quarter of an hour an opportunity has offered of which I have hastened to take advantage. I have but a moment ago received news that a company of one hundred and twenty lancers which has been raised by my orders in the name of his Majesty the Emperor, upon the left bank of the Rhine, has assembled at Spire ; I have appointed you captain of this company.”

“ Monseigneur — ” stammered the young man in amazement, and blushing with pleasure.

“ Here is your commission, signed by me and stamped with the seal of the Empire,” continued the duke, drawing from the folds of his dress a parchment, which he presented to the viscount ; “ take it, and set out instantly, without a moment’s delay. We shall probably take the field again, and I shall have need of you and your men. Go, Monsieur le Vicomte de Waldeck ; prove yourself worthy of this favor which is shown you, and may God protect you ! ”

The favor was indeed a great one ; and the young man, obeying without a word the order to set out at once, immediately took leave of his father and brother, and turning to Emmanuel, “ Monseigneur,” he said, “ you are

indeed the ‘Justiciary,’ as you are called, punishing evil-doers, and rewarding those who are worthy of praise. You have placed confidence in me; I will prove myself worthy of it. Adieu, Monseigneur.” And putting his horse to a gallop, the young man disappeared round the corner of the forest.

Emmanuel Philibert watched him until he was entirely lost to view. Then turning round and fixing a stern look upon Count Waldeck, “And now, it is your turn, Monsieur le Comte !” he said.

“Monseigneur,” interrupted the count, “in the first place, let me thank you for the kindness you have shown my son.”

“The kindness I have shown the Vicomte de Waldeck,” replied Emmanuel, coldly, “deserves no thanks, since it is simply a recognition of his worth. You have heard what he said, however,—that I am a justiciary, punishing evil-doers and rewarding those who are worthy of praise. Deliver up your sword, Monsieur le Comte !”

The count started, and replied in a tone which expressed no readiness to obey the order he had just received, “I deliver up my sword!—and why?”

“You know of my order against pillage and marauding, under penalty of the whipping-post and the gallows for soldiers, and of arrest or imprisonment for officers. You have violated my order in entering by force, in spite of the remonstrances of your elder son, the Château du Parcq, and in stealing the money, jewels, and plate of the occupants. You are a marauder and a pillager; deliver up your sword, Monsieur le Comte de Waldeck !”

Count Waldeck turned pale; but as we have said, it was difficult for a stranger to conjecture, from the tone of Emmanuel Philibert’s voice, what dangers were threatened by his sense of justice or his anger.

"My sword, Monseigneur?" said Waldeck. "Oh, doubtless I have committed some other offence. A gentleman does not deliver up his sword for so slight a thing!" And he tried to laugh disdainfully.

"Yes, Monsieur," replied Emmanuel, — "yes, you have committed another offence, but for the honor of the German nobility I was unwilling to speak of it. Do you wish me to speak? Well, listen then. When you had stolen the money, jewels, and plate, you were not satisfied; you had the mistress of the house bound to the foot of her bed, and you said to her, 'If within two hours you have not paid into our hands the sum of two hundred rose-crowns, I will set fire to your château!' You said that, and at the end of two hours, as the poor woman, having given you her last farthing, found it impossible to give you the two hundred crowns demanded, in spite of the entreaties of your elder son, you set fire to the château, — beginning with the farm-house, so that the unfortunate victim might have time for reflection before the flames reached the main building. And you cannot deny it, for the flame and smoke can be seen from here. You are an incendiary; deliver up your sword, Monsieur le Comte."

The count ground his teeth, for he was beginning to understand what terrible resolution was hidden under the calm but stern demeanor of the duke.

"Since you are so well informed as to the beginning of the affair, your intelligence of the end also is doubtless not less correct?"

"You are right, Monsieur, I know everything; but I wished to spare you the rope which you deserve."

"Monseigneur!" exclaimed Waldeck, in a threatening tone.

"Silence, Monsieur," said Emmanuel Philibert; "have

respect for your accuser, and tremble before your judge ! The end ? I will tell you what it was. At sight of the flames leaping into the air, your bastard, who had possession of the key of the chamber in which the prisoner was bound, entered that chamber. The unfortunate woman had uttered no cries when she saw the flames coming nearer ; that meant only death. She did cry out when she saw your bastard come toward her and seize her in his arms, for that meant dishonor ! The Vicomte de Waldeck heard these cries and ran to her aid. He called upon his brother to release the woman he was insulting ; but the latter, in answer to this appeal to his honor, threw his prisoner, bound as she was, upon the bed and drew his sword. The Vicomte de Waldeck drew his also, resolved to save this woman even at the peril of his life. The two brothers fought desperately, since they had for a long time hated each other. While this struggle was going on, you, Monsieur, entered, and thinking that your sons were fighting for the possession of this woman, you said, ‘The prettiest woman in the world is not worth one drop of the blood from the veins of a soldier. Put down your weapons, boys ! I will settle your affair.’ Then at the sound of your voice, the two brothers lowered their swords ; you stepped between them ; both watched you, to see what you were about to do. You went up to the woman who had been bound and thrown upon the bed, and before either of your sons had time to prevent this infamous deed, you drew your dagger and plunged it into her breast. Do not tell me that this thing did not take place ; do not tell me that it is not true ; your dagger is still wet and your hands are still bloody. You are an assassin ; deliver up your sword, Comte de Waldeck !’ ”

“ That is easy to say, Monseigneur,” replied the count ; “ but a Waldeck would not deliver his sword to you, prince

crowned or uncrowned, whichever you may be, if he were alone against seven of you; much more will he refuse when he has his son on his right and forty soldiers at his back."

"Then," said Emmanuel, with a slight change in the tone of his voice, "if you will not hand me your sword voluntarily, I must take it from you by force." And with one bound of his horse he was at Count Waldeck's side.

The latter, who was crowded so close that he had no room to draw his sword, put his hand to his holsters; but before he had time to unbutton them, Emmanuel Philibert had plunged his hand into his own, already open, and had armed himself with pistol ready cocked. This movement was so quick that neither Waldeck's bastard, the squire, nor the duke's page could prevent it. Emmanuel, with a hand as calm and sure as that of justice, fired the pistol close to the head of the count, burning his face with the powder and penetrating his brains with the bullet.

The count had scarcely time to utter a cry; he threw up his arms, fell slowly backward from his saddle like an athlete whom an invisible wrestler doubles up backward, let go the stirrup with his left foot, then with his right foot, and finally rolled over upon the ground. The jusciciary had administered justice; the count had died instantly.

During the whole time occupied by this scene Waldeck's bastard, completely covered with his coat of mail, had remained erect and motionless as an equestrian statue; but when he heard the pistol-shot and saw his father fall, he gave a cry of rage which burst with a grating sound through the visor of his helmet. Then addressing the astonished and terrified soldiers, "Help,

comrades !” he cried in German ; “this man is not our countryman. Death ! death to the Duke Emmanuel !”

But the soldiers answered by shaking their heads in token of refusal.

“ Ah !” cried the young man, with increasing violence, “you do not listen to me ! You refuse to avenge him who loved you as his children, who loaded you with money, who gorged you with booty ! Well, then I will be the one to avenge him, since you are ingrates and cowards !” And drawing his sword he was about to rush upon the duke ; but two men leaped to the horse’s head, seizing hold of the bit, one on each side, while a third encircled him with his arms.

The young man struggled furiously, heaping abuse upon those who held him fast. The duke looked on with a degree of pity ; he understood the despair of a son who has just seen a father fall dead at his feet.

“ Your Highness,” said the troopers, “ what do you wish to have done with this man ?”

“ Release him,” said the duke. “ He has threatened me, and if I should have him taken prisoner, he would think that I am afraid.”

The troopers took the sword from the bastard’s hands and let him go. With a single bound of his horse the young man cleared the space which separated him from Emmanuel Philibert. The latter awaited him with his hand upon the stock of his second pistol.

“ Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, Prince of Piedmont,” cried Waldeck’s bastard, stretching out his hand to him threateningly, “ understand that from this day forth I hate you with a mortal hatred. Emmanuel Philibert, you have killed my father !” (He lowered the visor of his helmet.) “ Observe carefully my face ; for whenever you shall see it, whether at night or in the

daytime, whether at a fête or in combat, woe, woe to you, Emmanuel Philibert!" And striking the spurs into his horse, he started off at full gallop, shaking his hand as if to hurl a parting malediction upon the duke, and shouting curses as he went.

"Villain!" exclaimed Emmanuel's squire, spurring on his horse in pursuit.

But the duke, with an imperative wave of the hand, said, "Not a step farther, Scianca-Ferro; I forbid it." Then turning to his page, who, pale as death, looked as if he would fall from the saddle, "What is it, Leone?" he said, drawing near and taking his hand. "Why, any one who saw you so pale and trembling would take you for a woman."

"Oh, my dear Duke," murmured the page, "assure me that you are not wounded, or I shall die!"

"My child," said the duke, "am I not in God's hands?" Then, addressing the troopers, "My friends," he said, pointing to the dead body of Count Waldeck, "see that this man has Christian burial, and let this example of my administration of justice prove to you that I am no respecter of persons."

And with a sign to Scianca-Ferro and Leone to follow him, he retraced his steps toward the camp, his face bearing no mark of the terrible scene in which he had just been an actor, except that it wore a more thoughtful expression than usual.

CHAPTER VII.

HISTORY AND ROMANCE.

WHILE the adventurers, unseen witnesses of the catastrophe we have just described, with regretful backward glances at the smoking ruins of the Château du Parcq are returning to their cavern to put the final touches to their articles of partnership, — useless for the present, to be sure, but which cannot fail to be, in time to come, the source of great advantage to the new association ; while the soldiers, in obedience to the command, or rather the request, of Emmanuel to provide for their late chief Christian burial, are on their way to dig in a corner of the cemetery of Hesdin a grave for him who, having received on earth punishment for his crime, rests now in the hope of divine mercy ; while Emmanuel Philibert, with his squire Scianca-Ferro and his page Leone, is riding back to his tent ; abandoning the prologue, scenery, and secondary characters of our drama, for its real action and its leading actors, who have at last made their appearance, we will undertake — that we may give the reader a fuller knowledge of their character, and of their situation, moral and political — an excursion, at once historic for some and romantic for others, into the domain of the past, the magnificent realm of the poet and the historian, of which no revolution can deprive them.

Emmanuel Philibert, the third son of Charles III., called “the Good,” and Beatrice of Portugal, was born at the Château de Chambéry on the 8th of July, 1528.

These two names Emmanuel and Philibert were bestowed on him,—the former out of respect to his maternal ancestor Emmanuel, King of Portugal, and the latter in fulfilment of a vow made by his father to Saint Philibert de Tournus.

At the time of his birth, which took place at four o'clock in the afternoon, he was so feeble that his respiration depended on the breathing of air into his lungs by one of his mother's women; and until the age of three years he could neither hold his head erect nor stand alone. So when the horoscope — which at that time was cast at the birth of every prince's son — declared that the prince who had just been born would be a great warrior, and would bring to the house of Savoy glory of a lustre superior to that of any which had been imparted to it, either by Pierre, surnamed "Le Petit Charlemagne," by Amadeus V., called "the Great," or by Amadeus VI., commonly called "the Green Count," — his mother could not restrain her tears, and his father, a pious and gentle prince, said, with a shake of his head and in a tone expressive of doubt, to the mathematician who announced to him this prediction, "May God hear you, my friend!"

Emmanuel Philibert was the nephew of Charles V. through his mother, Beatrice of Portugal, one of the most beautiful and accomplished princesses of her time. He was also cousin of François I. through his aunt, Louise of Savoy, under whose pillow Constable de Bourbon pretended to have left the cordon of the order of Saint-Esprit when François I. demanded it of him.

Emmanuel Philibert had another aunt, — the gifted Margaret of Austria, who left a collection of manuscript songs, still to be found in the national library of France, and who, overtaken by a storm on her way to Spain to marry the infante, son of Ferdinand and Isabella, after

previous betrothals to the dauphin of France and the king of England, thinking that she was about to die, composed for herself this curious epitaph, —

“ Weep, Loves, weep ! — fair Margot is dead ;
Who was three times betrothed, yet never was wed.”

Emmanuel Philibert was, as we have said, so feeble that in spite of the astrologer’s prediction that he would become a mighty warrior, his father destined him for the Church. So, at the age of three years, he was sent to Bologna to kiss the feet of Pope Clement VII., who had just crowned his uncle the Emperor Charles V., at whose request the young prince obtained from the pope the promise of a cardinalship. This was the origin of the epithet “Cardinalin” which was given him in childhood, very much to his annoyance. Why should it annoy a child to be called by this name ? We will state the reason.

The reader will remember that woman, or, let us say, that intimate friend of the Duchess of Savoy, who attending her in her sickness had kept alive with her breath the almost dying little Emmanuel Philibert. Six months before, she herself had given birth to a son who had come into the world as strong and vigorous as the son of the duchess was feeble and delicate.

Now, the duchess, considering that her friend had saved the child’s life, said to her, “ My dear Lucrezia, I give this child to you, for he is now as much yours as mine ; take him, nourish him with your milk as you have nourished him with your breath, and I shall owe you more than he himself ; he will owe to you only his life, while I shall owe to you my child ! ”

Lucrezia received as a sacred charge the child to whom she was to be foster-mother. Nevertheless, she feared

that it would be at the expense of her own little Rinaldo that the heir of the Duke of Savoy would gain health and strength, since whatever portion of the nourishment would be required to revive the little Emmanuel, by just so much would his foster-brother's share be lessened.

But Rinaldo at six months was as strong as many another child would have been at twelve months of age. Besides, Nature has its miracles, and the fount of maternal milk was never for a moment exhausted, although the two children drew their life from the same breasts. It gave pleasure to the duchess to see, hanging from the same living stem, her own child so delicate and the other so vigorous.

It seemed, too, as if the little Rinaldo understood this weakness and had compassion for it. Often the capricious ducal infant wanted the breast at which the other infant was nursing ; and the latter, its little face all smiles and its lips running over with milk, would yield its place to the exacting nursling.

The two children grew up thus together on Lucrezia's lap. At the age of three years Rinaldo appeared like a boy of five ; at the age of three years, as we have said, Emmanuel Philibert could scarcely walk, and only with effort could he lift his head from its drooping position on his breast. It was at this time that he was sent to Bologna, and that Pope Clement VII. promised him a cardinal's hat.

It seemed as if this promise brought good fortune to Emmanuel, and as if this name of "Cardinalin" procured for him the protection of God ; for from this time — when he was three years of age — his health went on improving and his body grew strong.

But the one who in this respect made wonderful progress was Rinaldo. His strongest toys flew into pieces

under his fingers ; he could not even touch anything that did not break ; the idea was conceived of making his playthings of steel, and he broke them as if they had been china. So it happened that the good Duke Charles III., who liked to watch the children at play, gave Emmanuel's companion the nickname "Scianca-Ferro," which in the Piedmontese patois means, "Iron-Breaker." The name clung to him.

It was very remarkable that Scianca-Ferro never made use of this miraculous strength except for the protection of Emmanuel, whom he adored, instead of being jealous of him as any other child would have been.

The young Emmanuel coveted extraordinarily this strength of his foster-brother, and he would gladly have exchanged his sobriquet of Cardinalin for that of Scianca-Ferro. He seemed, however, to acquire vigor from the continued association with this lustiness so much greater than his own. Scianca-Ferro, moderating his own strength to that of the young prince, wrestled with him, ran races with him, and sometimes, for fear of discouraging him, would let himself be thrown in the struggle or passed in the race. All their exercises were practised together, — horseback-riding, swimming, and fencing. In everything Scianca-Ferro was for the present superior ; but it was understood that it was only a matter of time, and that although somewhat backward for the time being, Emmanuel had not said his last word.

The two children were always together and loved each other like brothers. They were as jealous with regard to each other, as a mistress with her lover ; but the time was approaching when a third companion whom they would adopt with equal love would join in their sports.

One day when the court of Duke Charles III. was at

Vercelli, on account of disturbances which had broken out at Milan, the two young men rode out with their riding-master. They proceeded along the left bank of the Sesia, continued on through Novare, and went nearly to the river Tessin. The young duke was riding in advance, when suddenly a bull confined in a neighboring field began plunging and breaking down the fences which enclosed the pasture, and frightened the prince's horse, which flew over the meadows, clearing streams, thickets, and hedges as he went. Emmanuel was an admirable horseman, and there was nothing to fear on that score ; nevertheless Scianca-Ferro started in pursuit, taking the same route as his friend, and like him leaping over every obstacle in his way. The riding-master, more cautious, followed a winding road which would lead to the point in the direction of which the two young men were riding.

After a quarter of an hour's frantic pursuit, Scianca-Ferro, not seeing Emmanuel, and fearing that he had met with some accident, shouted with all his might. He called twice without receiving any answer ; but at last he thought he heard the prince's voice in the direction of the village of Oleggio. He turned his horse, and soon, guided by Emmanuel's voice, found the latter by the bank of a stream which flows into the Tessin.

At his feet lay the body of a dead woman, and in his arms a little boy from four to five years of age, who also seemed to be dying.

The horse, which had become quiet, was browsing at his ease upon the young shoots of trees, while his master was trying to restore the child to consciousness. There was nothing to be done for the woman ; she was already dead. She appeared to have succumbed to fatigue, misery, and hunger. The child, who had doubt-

less shared the fatigues and misery of its mother, seemed to be dying of starvation.

The village of Oleggio was only a mile distant. Scianca-Ferro put his horse to a gallop, and disappeared in the direction of the village. Emmanuel would have gone himself instead of sending his brother, but he had the child in his arms, and perceiving that the life which had almost departed was returning to the child, was unwilling to leave him.

The poor little fellow had led him to the side of the dead woman, and had said to him in the pathetic tone of childhood, ignorant of the extent of its misfortunes, "Wake Mamma ! Wake Mamma ! "

Emmanuel wept. What could he do, mere child himself, looking for the first time on death ? He had only his tears : those he gave.

Scianca-Ferro returned at last, bringing bread and a flask of muscat wine. They tried to pour a few drops of wine into the mother's mouth, — a vain attempt, for she was unquestionably dead. They then turned their attention to the child, who, although crying because his mother would not wake up, ate and drank, and was somewhat revived.

Just then the peasants from the village whom Scianca-Ferro had informed of the affair came up, together with the riding-master, whom they had met quite terrified at the loss of his two pupils, and had brought back with them to the place indicated by Scianca-Ferro. They knew, therefore, that it was the young Prince of Savoy who had sent for them ; and as Duke Charles was adored by his subjects, they offered immediately to do anything for the little orphan and its dead mother that Emmanuel might choose to ask.

Emmanuel selected from among the women one who

appeared kind and sensible ; he gave her all the money that he and Scianca-Ferro had with them, took down in writing the woman's name, and begged her to attend to the burial of the mother and provide for the first needs of the child.

Then, as it was growing late, the riding-master insisted that his pupils should return to Vercelli. The little orphan wept ; he wished to keep with him his good friend Emmanuel, — whose name he knew, but of whose rank he was ignorant. Emmanuel promised to return the next day, which somewhat calmed the child's grief ; but after he was taken away from Emmanuel he kept his arms extended toward this savior whom chance had sent him.

In fact, if the help sent to the poor child by chance, or rather by Providence, had been delayed even only two hours, he would have died by the side of his mother.

Although the riding-master strove with all diligence to hasten the return, his two pupils did not reach the château of Vercelli until evening. Much anxiety had been felt on their account, and messengers had been sent out in all directions to seek them. When the duchess began to upbraid them, Emmanuel related his story to her, — his gentle voice taking a tone of sadness from the sorrowful event. When he had finished his narration the duchess was no longer disposed to find fault, but on the contrary commended their conduct. Fully sharing her son's interest in the little orphan, she declared that on the day after the morrow — that is to say, immediately after the funeral of the child's mother — she would go herself to visit him ; and in fact, on the day named she set out in a litter for the village of Oleggio, the two young men attending her on horseback.

As they approached the village, Emmanuel could not restrain his impatience ; he put spurs to his horse and

rode on in advance, that he might see a little sooner the orphan child. His arrival gave great joy to the poor child. It had been necessary to tear him from his mother's body ; he would not believe that she was dead, and cried out repeatedly : "Don't put her in the ground ; don't put her in the ground ! I tell you she will wake up." From the moment when his mother was taken away from the house it had been necessary to keep him confined, — he was so eager to go and rejoin her.

The sight of his savior was comforting to him. Emmanuel told him that his mother, the duchess, had wished to see him and would arrive in a few moments.

"Oh, have you your mamma ?" said the little orphan. "Oh, I will pray the good God that she may not sleep never to wake again ! "

To the peasants the news that Emmanuel gave them, that the duchess was coming to visit their house, was of the greatest importance. They hastened forth to meet her ; and as in going through the streets they told where they were going and whom they expected to meet, others joined them, until finally the whole village had turned out.

Finally the cortége arrived, preceded by Scianca-Ferro, who had gallantly remained with the duchess as her escort. Emmanuel presented his protégé to his mother. The duchess asked the child a question which had not occurred to Emmanuel, — that is to say, she asked him his name and that of his mother.

The child replied that his name was Leone, and that his mother had been called Leona ; but he would give no further particulars, answering to every question put to him, "I don't know." And yet, strangely enough, one instinctively felt that this was a pretended ignorance, under which was concealed some secret. His mother,

doubtless, before dying, had requested him to answer all questions in that way ; and indeed, nothing less than the last request of a dying mother could have made such an impression upon a child of four years.

Then the duchess examined the orphan with a woman's curiosity. Although dressed in coarse garments, his hands were soft and white, and had evidently been cared for by a refined and lady-like mother. Also his manner of speaking was that of the aristocracy, and at four years of age he spoke French and Italian equally well.

The duchess asked to see the mother's clothes, and they were brought to her ; they were those of a country-woman. But the women who had undressed her said that they had never seen whiter skin, more delicate hands, nor smaller and more elegant feet. One article of dress also betrayed to what class of society the poor woman had belonged ; with her peasant's dress, her cotton skirt, her coarse woollen waist, and her heavy shoes, she wore silk stockings. Evidently she had taken flight in disguise, and of the clothes she had discarded before setting out, she had kept only the silk stockings which had betrayed her after death.

The duchess returned to the little Leone, and questioned him on all these points ; but his answer was always, "I don't know." The duchess could elicit nothing else ; so, adding her own instructions to those of Emmanuel, she again committed the poor orphan to the care of the kind country-people who had until then attended to his wants, gave them a sum of money double that which they had already received, and directed them to make inquiries about the mother and child, promising them a liberal reward for any intelligence they might bring her concerning them.

The little Leone wanted to go with Emmanuel ; and

the latter was very much inclined to insist on securing his mother's permission to take the child away with him, so much did he pity him. But he assured Leone that he would come to see him as soon as possible, and the duchess herself promised a second visit.

Unfortunately at about this time events took place which prevented the duchess from keeping her word. For the third time François I. declared war against Charles V. on the ground that he was heir to the duchy of Milan, through Valentina Visconti, wife of Louis d'Orléans, brother of Charles VI. In the first war François had been victorious at Marignano ; in the second, he had been routed at Pavia.

One would have thought that after the treaty of Madrid, after the prison of Toledo, and especially after having taken his oath, François I. would have renounced all pretension to this unfortunate duchy, which if it were delivered up to him would make the King of France a vassal of the Empire ; but on the contrary, he only awaited an opportunity for demanding it again, and seized upon the first which offered.

The present opportunity was a good one, as it happened ; but had it not been he would have embraced it with the same alacrity. François I., it is well known, was not troubled by any of those silly scruples which govern the actions of that race of fools called honest men.

The opportunity which chance now threw in his way was this : Maria Francesco Sforza, son of Lodovico il Moro, reigned at Milan ; but he reigned as vassal of the emperor, of whom he had bought his duchy, Dec. 23, 1529, for the sum of four hundred thousand ducats, payable during the first year of his reign, and the further sum of five hundred thousand, payable during the ten years following ; as security for these payments the châ-

teaux of Milan, Como, and Pavia remained in the hands of the emperor.

Now it happened about the year 1534 that François I. sent a Milanese gentleman, whose fortune he, François I., had made, as ambassador to the court of Duke Sforza. This gentleman's name was Francesco Maraviglia.

Having attained riches and position at the court of France, it was with both joy and pride that Francesco Maraviglia returned to his native city surrounded by all the pomp of an ambassador. He had taken with him his wife and his daughter, who was three years old, but had left at Paris his son Odoardo, who was twelve years old, as one of the pages of King François I.

Why was this ambassador offensive to Charles V., and why did the latter order Duke Sforza to put him out of the way at the first opportunity? This we do not know, and cannot discover until the secret correspondence of the emperor and the Duke of Milan is found, as was that of the emperor with Cosimo de' Medici. But we do know that the servants of Maraviglia having got into a quarrel with some of the country-people, and having had the misfortune to kill two subjects of Duke Sforza, the latter had Maraviglia arrested and imprisoned in the château of Milan, which, as we have said, was still in the hands of the emperor.

No one ever knew certainly what became of Maraviglia. Some say that he was poisoned; others that he stumbled and fell into a dungeon of whose proximity he had not been forewarned. But the most probable version of the story, and that most commonly accepted, is that he was executed, or rather assassinated, in prison. It is very certain that he disappeared, and that almost at the same time his wife and daughter also vanished and were not heard of afterward.

These events had taken place quite recently, — only a few days before Emmanuel's discovery of that unknown child and that dead woman on the banks of a stream. They were to exercise a terrible influence over the destiny of Duke Charles.

François I. grasped the opportunity. It was not the lamentations of the son left with him, demanding vengeance for the murder of his father; it was not that royal majesty had been outraged in the person of an ambassador; it was not that the law of the people had been violated by an assassin, — it was not such considerations as these that turned the scales in favor of war; no, it was the old leaven of vengeance working in the heart of the vanquished of Pavia and the prisoner of Toledo.

A third expedition into Italy was resolved upon. The moment was favorable; Charles V. was in Africa warring against the famous Khaïr-Eddin surnamed Barbarossa. But in order to accomplish this new invasion, it was necessary to pass through Savoy. Now Savoy was in the possession of Charles le Bon, Emmanuel Philibert's father, uncle of François I., brother-in-law of Charles V.

For whom would Charles le Bon declare himself? Would it be for his brother-in-law or for his nephew? This was an important thing to know. It was of course doubtful; in all probability the Duke of Savoy would ally himself with the Empire, and be hostile to France.

In fact, the Duke of Savoy had given to Charles V., in pledge of loyalty, his elder son Louis, Prince of Piedmont; he had refused to receive from François I. the cordon of Saint Michel, and an artillery company with twelve thousand crowns for its support; he had occupied territory belonging to the marquisate of Saluzzo, a fief of Dauphiné; he had refused homage to the crown of France for the province of Faucigny; in correspondence

with the emperor he had rejoiced over the defeat at Pavia ; and finally he had lent money to Constable de Bourbon when he passed through Savoy on his way to be killed by Benvenuto Cellini at the siege of Rome.

It was necessary, however, to find out the truth of the matter. Accordingly, François I. sent Guillaume Poyet, president of the Paris parliament, to Turin. He was instructed to demand of Duke Charles III. these two things : first, permission for the French army to pass through Savoy and Piedmont ; secondly, the surrender, as pledges of good faith, of Montmeillan, Veillane, Chivass, and Vercelli. He was to offer to Duke Charles, in exchange, territory in France, and the king's daughter Marguerite in marriage with Prince Louis, elder brother of Emmanuel Philibert.

Charles III. appointed Purpurat, president of Piedmont, to conduct the negotiations with Guillaume Poyet, president of the Paris parliament. He was authorized to grant permission for the passage of French troops across the provinces of Savoy and Piedmont ; but as to the surrender of the four places named, he was to adopt at first a dilatory policy, and should Poyet insist, he was to answer with an absolute refusal.

The discussion between the two plenipotentiaries became heated ; so that, overcome by Purpurat's cogent arguments, Poyet at last exclaimed, —

“ It must be so, because it is the king's will.”

“ Pardon,” replied Purpurat, “ but I find no such law among those of Piedmont.” And rising from his seat, he abandoned the future to the omnipotent will of the King of France, and the wisdom of the Most High.

The negotiations came to an end ; and one day in the month of February, 1535, while Duke Charles was at his château of Vercelli, a herald was introduced to his pres-

ence who, in the name of King François I., declared war against him.

The duke quietly listened to him, and when he had delivered his warlike message replied calmly, —

“ My friend, I have always rendered service to the King of France, and I consider that the titles of ally, friend, servant, and uncle call for measures altogether different from this. I have done what I could to be on good terms with him ; I have neglected no means of showing him how far wrong he is in cherishing resentment against me. I am well aware that my strength is not to be compared with his ; but since he cannot in any way be persuaded to listen to reason, and since he appears determined to possess himself of my States, say to him that he will find me on the frontier, and that, seconded by my allies and friends, I hope to defend myself and protect my country. The king, my nephew, is acquainted with my motto : *He cannot fail whom God protects.*” And he dismissed the herald, after giving him a costly suit of clothes and a pair of gloves filled with crowns.

After such a reply there was nothing to do but to prepare for war ; and the first step taken by Charles III. was to place his wife and child in safety in the fortress of Nice. The departure from Vercelli for Nice was announced to take place almost immediately.

Emmanuel Philibert thought the occasion opportune for obtaining from his mother a favor which he had till then delayed asking, — namely, that Leone should be withdrawn from the house of the peasants, where he had been left only temporarily, as was well understood, and should be made, like Scianca-Ferro, the young prince’s intimate companion.

The duchess, as we have already said, was a woman of good judgment. All that she had observed in connection

with the orphan — the delicacy of his features, the beauty of his hands, the distinction of his language — led her to believe that some great mystery was hidden under the coarse garments of the mother and the child. She was, too, a woman of religious inclinations ; she saw the finger of God in that adventure of Emmanuel after the accident occasioned by the bull, — an accident that seemed to her almost providential since it led the young prince to the dead woman and the dying child. She reflected that when everything was falling away from her family, when misfortune threatened her house, when the sombre angel of sorrow was pointing out to her husband, herself, and her child the mysterious paths of exile, — that this was no time to repulse the orphan, who grown to manhood, might be to them a strong support. She recalled the messenger of God presenting himself, in the guise of a common traveller, at the threshold of the blind Tobias, to whom by the hands of his son he afterward restored sight and happiness ; and far from offering any objection to what Emmanuel proposed, she readily acceded to his request, almost before he could declare it, and with the duke's permission she authorized her son to have his young protégé brought to Vercelli. From Vercelli to Nice, Leone would make the journey in company with the other two children.

Emmanuel waited only until the next day to carry the good news to Leone. At daybreak he descended to the stables, saddled with his own hands his African pony, and started for Oleggio with all speed.

He found Leone very sorrowful. The poor orphan had learned that his rich and powerful protectors had been visited in their turn by misfortune. He had heard that the count was to set out for Nice, — that is to say, for a country the very name of which was strange to him, —

and when Emmanuel arrived, excited by his ride and beaming with delight, Leone was weeping as if for the second time he had lost his mother.

It is especially through their tears that children see the angels ; and we do not exaggerate in saying that Emmanuel seemed like an angel when seen through the tears of Leone.

In a few words all was told, explained, and understood, and to tears succeeded smiles. There is a period in life — and it is life's happiest period — when tears and smiles are close together, as night is close to morning.

Two hours after Emmanuel's arrival came Scianca-Ferro, with the first squire of the prince and two attendants, leading by the bridle the duchess's own horse. A good sum of money was left with the peasants who for six weeks had taken care of Leone. He embraced them weeping again ; but this time he shed tears of joy as well as of regret. Emmanuel aided him to mount, and lest some accident should happen to his dear protégé, himself led the horse that carried him.

Scianca-Ferro, far from being jealous of that new friendship, galloped joyously along, riding on in advance and returning again, leading the way as if he had been an actual captain, and smiling with that beautiful smile of childhood which reveals the heart while it shows the teeth.

Thus they arrived at Vercelli. The duchess and the duke embraced Leone, who became at once a member of the family. On the next day they set out for Nice, where they arrived without accident.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SQUIRE AND THE PAGE.

IT is not our intention, since the work has been already so well done by others, to enter into a description of the battles which in this great strife desolated Italy during the first part of the sixteenth century. Our task is a much more humble one, but at the same time, it must be said, more attractive to ourselves and more interesting to our readers. Therefore, in the following story we shall contemplate only the most important events of that period, which stand forth in commanding prominence, as the lofty summits of the Alps lift high above the clouds their peaks covered by everlasting snow.

François I. crossed Savoy and Piedmont, and overspread Italy with his troops. For three years the cannon of the Empire and of France kept up their thunder, sometimes in Provence, sometimes in the Milanese. Beautiful plains of Lombardy and Piedmont, the angel of death alone knows how many corpses were required to give you your inexhaustible fertility !

During all this time, under the beautiful sky of Nice, cloudless by day and brilliant by night, when even the insects are flying sparks of light, the children grew up under the watchful care of the Princess Beatrice and under the eye of God.

Leone had become an indispensable member of the happy trinity ; he joined in all the sports, but not in all the exercises ; his little hands were not suited to the vio-

ient exercises of the drill, and his arms were considered by his masters too weak ever to carry lance or shield. Leone was three years younger than his companions, it is true, but there appeared to be ten years' difference between them, especially since — doubtless by the grace of the Lord who was reserving him for great deeds — Emmanuel had taken to growing in health and strength as if he had determined to overtake in this respect his foster-brother, Scianca-Ferro. The companions of the little duke fell very naturally into their respective positions ; Scianca-Ferro became his squire, while Leone, less ambitious, was satisfied to be his page.

In the mean time news had come that the eldest son of the duke had died at Madrid. This was a source of great sorrow for Duke Charles and the Duchess Beatrice. God provided consolation for this grief, it is true, — if it is possible for a father and especially a mother to be consoled for the death of a child. Prince Louis had lived for a long time away from home, while, in daily intercourse with the duke and duchess, Emmanuel Philibert, who every day seemed more likely to justify the prediction of the horoscope, was growing beautiful as the lily and strong as the oak.

But God, who doubtless had meant only to try the exiles, soon smote them with a blow much more cruel. The Duchess Beatrice fell into a decline, and in spite of the skill of the doctors, and in spite of the care of her husband, her children, and her women, she died on the 8th of January, 1538.

The duke's grief was profound, but borne without a murmur. Emmanuel was almost in despair. Fortunately the young prince had the companionship of that other orphan who had known sorrow. What would he have done without this gentle friend, who did not try to com-

fort him, and who, instead of philosophizing, was content to share his grief?

Doubtless Scianca-Ferro also suffered from the death of the duchess; if he could have restored her to life by challenging some terrible giant in his tower or by bearding some fabulous dragon in its den, the paladin of eleven years would have set out at once and without hesitation to perform even at the expense of his life this exploit which would bring joy and happiness to his friend once more. But this was the limit of his powers of consolation; his vigorous nature did not give way easily to unmanly tears. A wound might cause his blood to flow, but trouble could never draw tears from his eyes. Scianca-Ferro must have dangers to contend against, and not misfortunes to endure.

What, then, did he do while Emmanuel Philibert wept with his head bowed upon Leone's shoulder? He saddled his horse, girded on his sword, slung his sledge to his saddle-bow, and wandering about over that beautiful range of hills which borders the Mediterranean, like an enraged mastiff breaking between his teeth sticks and stones, imagined himself fighting against the heretics of Germany or the Saracens of Africa, saw imaginary enemies in insensible and inanimate objects, and in default of breastplates to pierce and helmets to cleave, broke the rocks with his hammer, and cleft the pines and the young oaks with his sword, seeking and finding alleviation of his pain in the violent exercise so necessary to his rugged organization.

As time passed, their grief, although still existing as fond regret and tender memory, gradually disappeared from their faces; instead of lamenting the absence here below of the wife, the mother, and the friend, they turned their thoughts to the world of spirits.

Consolation is very near the heart which turns to God. And besides, time brought its succession of events which imposed on grief itself their powerful distractions.

A congress had just been decided on, to take place at Nice, between Pope Paul III. (Alessandro Farnese), François I., and Charles V. The points under discussion were to be the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, the creation of a duchy for Lodovico Farnese, and the restoration of his States to the Duke of Savoy.

Nice had been chosen by the pope and Charles V. in the hope that in recognition of the hospitality of his uncle, King François I. would be more readily induced to make concessions.

There was also a reconciliation to be effected between Pope Paul III. and Charles V. Alessandro Farnese had given to his eldest son Lodovico the cities of Parma and Plaisance, in exchange for the principalities of Camerino and Nepi, which he had taken away from him in order to give them to his second son Ottavio. This investiture had displeased Charles V., who, Maria Francesco having died in 1535, had refused the pope, whatever sum he might offer for it, that famous duchy of Milan which was, if not the cause, at least the pretext for this interminable war between France and the Empire.

Certainly Charles V. was right ; the new Duke of Parma and Plaisance was that infamous Lodovico Farnese who said that he did not care to be loved provided he was feared, who disarmed noblemen, horsewhipped women, and insulted bishops. The popes of the sixteenth century were not fortunate in their children !

The object of the congress of Nice, then, was not only to reconcile the Duke of Savoy with the King of France, but also to reconcile the pope with the emperor.

Charles III., however, rendered prudent by misfortune,

did not see without alarm his nephew, his brother-in-law, and their holy master established in his last fortified place. What assurance had he that his dominions would be restored to him, or that the only city left him would not be taken from him ?

Therefore, for greater security, he shut up Emmanuel Philibert — his last heir, as Nice was his last city — in the fortress which commanded the place, with instructions to the governor not to open the castle to any body of soldiers, whether they came in the name of the emperor, in the name of King François I., or in the name of the pope. Then he went in person to meet Paul III., who, according to the programme agreed upon, would arrive a few days before the emperor and the King of France.

When the pope was about a league from Nice, the governor received a letter from the duke ordering him to prepare apartments in the castle for the pope. This letter was brought by his Holiness's captain of the guards, who at the head of two hundred men demanded admission to the castle to render personal service to his master.

The duke, in his letter, had mentioned the pope, but there was not a word about the captain and his two hundred men. This was embarrassing, for the pope demanded the very thing which the governor had been forbidden to grant.

The governor called a council at which Emmanuel Philibert was present, although only eleven years old. Doubtless, it was thought that his presence would keep up the courage of the defenders of the château.

While the deliberations were going on, the child observed hanging against the wall the wooden model of the castle which was the cause of this sudden disagreement between Charles III. and the pope. “Upon my word,

gentlemen," he said to the counsellors, who had passed a whole hour in discussion without arriving at any conclusion, "see how little reason there is to be disturbed. Since we have both a wooden and a stone castle, let us give the wooden castle to the pope and keep the one of stone for ourselves."

"Gentlemen," said the governor, "this boy shows us our duty; the pope may have the wooden castle if he likes, but I swear to God that while I live he shall not have the castle built of stone!"

The boy's answer, with that of the governor, was reported to the pope, who urged his demand no further, and took up his residence in the convent of the Cordeliers. The emperor and the King of France then arrived and pitched their tents on opposite sides of the city, the convent occupied by the pope being in the centre.

The congress was opened, but unfortunately the results were not what had been expected. The emperor claimed for his brother-in-law the States of Savoy and Piedmont, while François I. demanded the duchy of Milan for his second son the Duc d'Orléans.

Finally, the pope, who also wished to procure a settlement for his own son, demanded that a prince who was a relative neither of François I. nor of Charles V. should be elected Duke of Milan on condition of receiving from the emperor the investiture of his duchy, and of paying tribute to the King of France.

Each desired the impossible, since his desire was in exact opposition to the wishes of the others. And as they could not come to any definite settlement of the questions at issue, they finally agreed upon a truce.

All the parties, indeed, desired this truce, — François I., that he might have time to renew his half-wasted army, and replenish his wholly exhausted treasury; Charles V.,

that he might have an opportunity to put a stop to the incursions of the Turks into his two kingdoms of Naples and Sicily ; Paul III., that he might at least assure himself of the principalities of Parma and Plaisance for his son, since he could not procure for him the duchy of Milan.

A truce of ten years was concluded ; the term of years being fixed by François I. himself. “Ten years or nothing !” he said peremptorily ; and ten years were agreed upon. And yet it was François himself who broke the truce in four years.

Charles III., who feared that from these conferences would result the sequestration of the few estates remaining to him, rejoiced even more at the departure of his illustrious guests than he had dreaded their arrival. They left him as they had found him, except that he was the poorer for the cost of their entertainment, the expenses of which they had forgotten to pay.

The pope was the only one who had derived any advantage in this business ; he had secured two marriage contracts,—for the marriage of his second son Otavio Farnese with Margaret of Austria, widow of Giuliano de' Medici, who had been assassinated at Florence in the church of Santa Maria del Fiore ; and the marriage of his niece Vittoria with Antoine, eldest son of Charles de Vendôme.

Relieved from all solicitude with respect to François I., Charles V. began to make at Genoa preparations against the Turks ; these preparations were so vast that it required two years to complete them.

At the end of this time, just as the fleet was about to set sail, Duke Charles III. decided to pay a visit to his brother-in-law, and present to him his son Emmanuel Philibert, who was just entering his thirteenth year. It is needless to say that Scianca-Ferro and Leone were of

the party, for they accompanied Emmanuel wherever he went.

For some time the young prince's mind was very much preoccupied. He was engaged in composing a speech, of which he did not like to say anything either to Monseigneur Louis Alardet, Bishop of Lausanne, his preceptor, or to his tutors Louis de Châtillon, Lord of Musinens, Grand Equerry of Savoy, Jean-Baptiste Provana, Seigneur of Leyni, and Edouard de Genève, Baron de Lullens. He therefore contented himself with talking of his speech to his squire and his page. His intention was to ask of the emperor permission to accompany him in his expedition to Barbary.

Scianca-Ferro excused himself from giving an opinion, saying that he should consider himself perfectly competent to carry a challenge, but in the art of speech-making he was not at all at home.

Leone also declined to give advice, saying that the mere thought of the perils Emmanuel Philibert must encounter in such an expedition so disturbed his mind that he could not put together the first two words of such a petition.

The young prince found that he must rely upon himself. So, with the aid of Livy, Quintus Curtius, Plutarch, and other writers of antiquity, he composed the speech he would address to the emperor.

The emperor was living with his friend Andrea Doria, in that beautiful palace which is, so to speak, the king of the port of Genoa; and he watched the fitting out of his fleet while promenading those magnificent terraces from which the prodigal admiral after entertaining at dinner the ambassadors of Venice ordered the silver from which they had dined to be thrown into the sea.

Duke Charles, Emmanuel Philibert, and their retinue

were conducted into the presence of the emperor as soon as they were announced.

The emperor embraced his brother-in-law, and was about to embrace his nephew in the same manner ; but Emmanuel Philibert disengaged himself gracefully from the august arms, and kneeling at the feet of the emperor, with his squire on one side and his page on the other, before his father even suspected his intentions, and with the gravest air possible, addressed to the emperor the following speech : “ Devoted to the support of your dignity and your cause, which are also those of God and our holy religion, I come of my own free will and joyfully to beseech you, Cæsar, to receive me as a volunteer among that infinite number of warriors who come from every direction to serve under your standard. So happy I should be, Cæsar, to learn under the greatest of kings, under an invincible emperor, the discipline of the camp and the art of war.”

The emperor looked at him with a smile, and while Scianca-Ferro expressed aloud his admiration for his prince’s speech, while, pale with fear, Leone prayed God to inspire the emperor with the happy thought of refusing this offer of Emmanuel, he replied gravely : “ Prince, I thank you for this mark of attachment. Persist in these noble sentiments ; they will be useful to us both. You are still too young to follow me to battle ; but if some years hence you have the same earnest desire, rest assured the opportunity will not be wanting.” And raising the young prince, he embraced him ; then, as if to console him, taking off his own cordon of the Golden Fleece, he put it round Emmanuel’s neck.

“ Ah, *mordieu !* ” exclaimed Scianca-Ferro, “ that is better than the cardinal’s hat.”

“ You have a brave companion there, Nephew,” said

Charles V., "we will give him also a chain, and later we will suspend from it some sort of a cross." And taking a gold chain from the neck of one of the noblemen present, he threw it to Scianca-Ferro, saying, "That is for you, my fine squire."

Quick as Charles V.'s movement had been, Scianca-Ferro had time to throw himself on his knees, so that he was in that respectful attitude when he received the emperor's present.

"Come," said the conqueror of Pavia, who was in good humor, "every one must have his share, even the page;" and drawing from his little finger a diamond, "Pretty page," he said, "it is your turn."

But to the great astonishment of Emmanuel Philibert, Scianca-Ferro, and every one present, Leone appeared not to have heard, and stood motionless in his place.

"Oh! oh!" said Charles V., "we have a deaf page, it seems;" and speaking louder, he said, "Come, pretty page, come here!"

But instead of obeying, Leone took a step backward.

"Leone!" cried Emmanuel, seizing the child's hand and trying to lead him to the emperor.

But, strange to say, Leone tore his hand away from Emmanuel's, uttered a cry, and darted out of the room.

"An unselfish page!" said Charles V., "and you must tell me where you procure such, my good nephew. The diamond I offered him is worth a thousand pistoles!" Then turning to the courtiers, "A good example to follow, gentlemen," said Charles V.

CHAPTER IX.

LEONE-LEONA.

WHEN, a short time after his return to the Palace Corsi, where he was staying with his father, Emmanuel Philibert asked Leone to tell him why he had refused the diamond, and why, like a young wild hawk, he had flown away, so to speak, with a cry of terror, the child was silent, and no entreaty could draw from him a single word on the subject. He evinced the same determination as he had exhibited when the Duchess Beatrice had endeavored to elicit from him some information about his mother, and he had refused to speak.

But how could the Emperor Charles V. be concerned in the calamity which had fallen upon the orphan page? This was a problem in regard to which Emmanuel Philibert could form no conjectures. Whatever might be the explanation, he was ready to impute wrong-doing to every one, even to his uncle, rather than suspect for a moment that Leone was guilty of caprice or thoughtlessness.

Two years had flown since the truce had been agreed upon at Nice. That was a very long time for François I. to keep his word; and all parties were surprised by his fidelity,—especially Charles V., who during the interview which he had had with his brother-in-law did not cease to mistrust what the King of France might do as soon as he, Charles V., should be no longer present to protect the poor duke.

In fact, hardly had the emperor set sail when the Duke of Savoy, on his return to Nice, received a messenger from François I. François proposed to his uncle to yield to him Savoy, on condition that Charles III. would give up Piedmont to him, to be annexed to the crown of France.

The duke, indignant that such a proposition should be made to him, sent back his nephew's messenger, and forbade him to appear again in his presence.

What had given François I. the assurance to declare war for the fourth time against the emperor? The fact that he had two new allies,—Luther and Soliman, the Huguenots of Germany and the Saracens of Africa. Strange allies these for the "most Christian" king, for the "eldest son of the Church"!

It is a striking fact that during that long-continued struggle between François I. and Charles V. the one who is continually false to his word is called "the knightly king"! After having "lost all except honor" on the battle-field of Pavia, he put upon that honor, unblemished by the defeat, an ineffaceable stigma by signing in his prison a treaty that he did not mean to keep.

Behold this king, who ought to be driven from history as Christ drove the money-changers from the temple, this soldier knighted by Bayard, and cursed by Saint-Vallier because he did not keep his word,—he seems to have gone mad. He is the friend of the Turk and the heretic; he offers his right hand to Soliman, and his left to Luther; he, the son of Louis, allies himself with the son of Mahomet! So God, after sending to this king defeat, the daughter of his anger, sends him the plague, the daughter of his vengeance!

Notwithstanding all this he is called in the books—in those of the historians, at least—the knightly king! It

is true, we who are not historians call him the infamous king, perjurer toward his enemies, perjurer toward his friends, and perjurer toward God !

This time, on receiving the Duke of Savoy's answer, he threatened Nice itself.

The Duke of Savoy left on guard at Nice a brave Savoyard cavalier, Odinet de Montfort by name, and taking his way through the Col di Tende, he arrived at Vercelli, where he set about mustering the few troops he could still command.

Emmanuel Philibert had entreated his father to allow him to remain at Nice and serve his first campaign at once against François I. and Soliman ; but the life of the only heir of his house was too precious to the duke for him to grant such a request. There was not, however, the same objection in the case of Scianca-Ferro, and he eagerly made use of the permission granted him.

The duke, his son, and Leone, with their suite, had left Nice but a few leagues behind them, when a fleet of two hundred sail, flying both Turkish and French standards, was seen entering the harbor of Villa-Franca, where it disembarked ten thousand Turks under Khair-Eddin, and twelve thousand French under the Duc d'Enghien.

The siege was terrible ; the garrison defended its position inch by inch, and every one — citizens, soldiers, and gentlemen — performed prodigies of valor. The town was laid open in ten different places, and the Turks and French entered through ten different breaches. Then every house, every street, and every square was defended against the invaders, in whose steps followed the flames ; so that when Odinet de Montfort retreated within the castle he left to the enemy only a city in ruins.

The next day a herald summoned him to surrender.

But shaking his head, he said, " My friend, you make a mistake in proposing to me such a cowardly act. My name is *Montfort*; my arms are pikes, and my motto is, 'Stand firm !'"

Montfort showed himself worthy of his motto, of his coat-of-arms, and of his name. He stood firm until, the duke approaching from one direction with four thousand Piedmontese, and Alphonzo d'Avalos arriving from another direction with six thousand Spaniards, the Turks and the French raised the siege.

It was a day of rejoicing for Duke Charles and his subjects when they returned to Nice, ruined as was the city ; it was also a day of rejoicing for Emmanuel Philibert and his squire. Scianca-Ferro had justified the name given him by Charles III., when his foster-brother asked him how he had succeeded when he had real breastplates and real shields to strike. " Bah ! " he answered, " they are not so difficult to cleave as oaks ; they are not so hard to crush as rocks."

" Oh that I could have been there !" murmured Emmanuel Philibert, not perceiving that Leone, tightening his hold on Emmanuel's arm, had turned pale at the thought of the dangers which Scianca-Ferro had already encountered, and to which Emmanuel must some time be exposed.

Our poor page, it is true, was later on quite reassured by the treaty of Crespy, the result of both the invasion of Provence by Charles V. and also of the battle of Cérisolles. This treaty, which was signed on the 14th of October, 1544, stipulated that Philippe d'Orléans, second son of François I., should marry, at the end of two years, the emperor's daughter, and should receive with her as dowry the duchy of Milan and the Netherlands ; while on his part the King of France should renounce all

claim to the kingdom of Naples, and restore to the Duke of Savoy all that he had taken from him, with the exception of the fortresses of Pignerol and Montmellian, which should be added to the French territory as places of defence. The terms of this treaty were to be carried into effect in two years, — that is to say, at the time of the marriage of the Duc d'Orléans with the emperor's daughter.

We have now come to the year 1545. The children have grown up. Leone, the youngest of the three, is fourteen years of age; Emmanuel, seventeen; Scianca-Ferro, the oldest of all, is six months older than Emmanuel.

What was going on at this time in the mind of Leone, and why was the young man becoming daily more sad? This Emmanuel and Scianca-Ferro tried in vain to discover. It was strange, indeed, but the older Leone grew, the less he joined in the sports of his companions. Emmanuel, that his epithet Cardinalin might be entirely forgotten, and the squire, that he might be still more worthy of the sobriquet Scianca-Ferro, passed whole days in mock combats, wielding the sword, the lance, or the axe with strength and skill. Emmanuel had acquired great proficiency in the use of arms, while Scianca-Ferro had been endowed by nature with the greatest power and vigor of which human muscle is capable.

At these times Leone would stand in a pensive attitude on some tower, from the top of which he could see the exercises of the young men and watch Emmanuel; or if their passion for mock combats seemed to be carrying them too far, he would take a book and withdraw to a solitary corner of the garden to read.

Riding was the only exercise to which Leone had shown any inclination, — doubtless because it offered him the means for following Emmanuel; but for some time past,

and in proportion as his melancholy had increased, the page had gradually given up even this exercise.

It was a thing utterly incomprehensible to Emmanuel, that upon any allusion to the fact that he would sometime become a rich and powerful prince, the page's countenance assumed a deeper melancholy than usual.

One day the duke received from the Emperor Charles V. a letter in which he proposed a marriage between Emmanuel Philibert and the daughter of his brother, King Ferdinand. Leone was present when this letter was read, and he could not conceal the effect it produced upon him ; to the great astonishment of Duke Charles III. and Scianca-Ferro, who sought in vain the reason for such grief, he suddenly burst into tears and left the room.

Duke Charles having gone to his own apartment, Emmanuel rushed out to follow his page. The feeling he entertained for Leone was peculiar, — not at all resembling that with which Scianca-Ferro inspired him. He would have given his life to save that of Scianca-Ferro ; he would have given his blood to save that of his foster-brother ; but he would have given both life and blood to restrain the tear trembling on the velvety eyelid and the long black lashes of Leone. On seeing him weep he wished to discover the cause of his grief. For more than a year he had observed the increasing melancholy of the young page, and had often demanded of him the cause of his sadness ; but immediately Leone had made an effort at self-control, had shaken his head as if to drive away gloomy thoughts, and had answered, smiling : “I am too happy, Monseigneur Emmanuel, and I am always in fear that such happiness will not last !”

And Emmanuel in his turn had shaken his head. But as he observed that too much insistence seemed only to

increase Leone's unhappiness, he had contented himself with taking his hands in his own and gazing earnestly into his face as if to question him through every sense at once. But Leone would slowly turn away his eyes, and gently withdraw his hands from Emmanuel's.

Then Emmanuel would go to rejoin Scianca-Ferro, about whose sensations he never thought of inquiring, and whose countenance it would never have occurred to him to search with his gaze while he clasped his hands in his own,—so different was the friendship between Emmanuel and Scianca-Ferro from that which united Emmanuel and Leone.

But on this day Emmanuel sought for the page for more than an hour in the château and in the park without finding him. He asked every one for information, but no one had seen Leone. Finally he asked one of the grooms, who said that Leone had gone into the church, and that he was probably there still.

Emmanuel ran to the church, and looking over the whole interior of the dimly lighted edifice, he saw Leone on his knees in the most retired corner of the most obscure chapel. He approached almost near enough to touch him, before the page, plunged in meditation, perceived his presence. Then he advanced another step and touched him on the shoulder, speaking his name.

Leone started and looked at Emmanuel with an almost wild expression.

"What are you doing in the church at this hour, Leone ?" asked Emmanuel, anxiously.

"I am praying God," answered Leone, sadly, "to give me strength to carry into execution a plan which I am contemplating."

"And what is that plan, child ?" demanded Emmanuel; "am I not to know it ?"

"On the contrary, Monseigneur," replied Leone, "you will be the first to know it."

"You promise me, Leone?"

"Alas, yes, Monseigneur," replied the young man, with a sad smile.

Emmanuel took his hand and tried to lead him out of the church. But Leone gently disengaged his hand, as for some months he had been wont to do under such circumstances, and kneeling again, entreated with a gesture the young prince to leave him. "I will come presently," he said. "I need to be a moment longer with God."

There was something so solemn and so melancholy in the young man's tone that Emmanuel did not think of resisting it. He left the church, but he waited at the door for Leone. When Leone came out he gave a start on seeing Emmanuel, and yet did not seem astonished to find him there.

"And this secret," demanded Emmanuel, — "shall I know it soon?"

"To-morrow I hope to have strength to tell you, Monseigneur," replied Leone.

"In what place?"

"In this church."

"At what hour?"

"Come at the same time at which you came to-day."

"And until then, Leone?" asked Emmanuel, in a tone almost beseeching.

"Until then, I hope that Monseigneur will not oblige me to leave my room; I have need of solitude and reflection."

Emmanuel looked at the page with an indefinable feeling of apprehension, and accompanied him to his own door. There Leone took the prince's hand to kiss it;

but Emmanuel in his turn withdrew his hand and extended his arms to draw the child to him and kiss him on the face. But Leone gently repulsed him, evaded his outstretched arms, and with an accent of sweetness and unspeakable sadness said, "Until to-morrow, Monseigneur!" And he withdrew into his room.

Emmanuel stood motionless for a moment at the door. He heard Leone draw the bolt, and it seemed as if the coldness of the iron grating along the door penetrated to his very soul. "Oh, my God!" he murmured in a low tone, "what, then, has happened to me, and what is this that I feel?"

"What the devil are you doing there?" said a loud voice behind Emmanuel, while a hand was placed heavily on his shoulder.

Emmanuel sighed, took Scianca-Ferro's arm, and drew him into the garden. Both sat down side by side upon a bench, and Emmanuel related to Scianca-Ferro what had just taken place between him and Leone.

Scianca-Ferro reflected a moment, looked up in the air, and bit his finger-nails. Then, suddenly, "I think that I know what it is," he said.

"What is it, then?"

"Leone is in love!"

Emmanuel felt as if he had been stabbed to the heart. "Impossible!" he stammered.

"And why impossible?" said Scianca-Ferro. "I am in love myself!"

"You! And with whom?" demanded Emmanuel.

"Eh, *parbleu!* with Gervaise, the daughter of the doorkeeper at the château. She was dreadfully frightened during the siege, poor child, especially when night came; and I kept by her to reassure her."

Emmanuel shrugged his shoulders. He was very sure

that Leone had not fallen in love with a doorkeeper's daughter.

Scianca-Ferro mistook Emmanuel's gesture for one of disdain.

"Ah, Monsieur Cardinalin," he said, — for in spite of Emmanuel's ribbon of the Golden Fleece, there were moments when Scianca-Ferro called him by this name, — "don't be too particular. Well, I tell you that I prefer Gervaise to all the fine ladies of the court. And if there is a tournament, I am ready to wear her colors and defend her beauty against all comers."

"I should pity those who were not of your opinion, my dear Scianca-Ferro," replied Emmanuel.

"And you are right; for the daughter of my doorkeeper I would strike as hard as for the daughter of a king."

Emmanuel arose, pressed Scianca-Ferro's hand, and went to his apartments.

Certainly, as he said, Scianca-Ferro was too rude a striker to be able to comprehend the workings of Emmanuel's heart or to divine the struggle of Leone's soul.

As for Emmanuel, although endowed with the greatest delicacy of feeling and the most exquisite refinement of mind, he sought vainly in the solitude of his chamber and in the silence of the night to discover the cause of Leone's sorrow, and also the cause of his own emotions. He waited impatiently for the morrow.

The morning passed slowly, and Emmanuel did not see Leone. When the appointed hour arrived he set out for the church in as great a state of excitement as if it were the most critical moment of his life. Indeed the treaty of Crespy, concluded a year previously, and which decided the question of the final restoration or alienation of his dominions, had seemed to him of far less importance

than the secret which Leone was about to impart to him.

He found the young man at the same place as on the day before. He had evidently been praying for some time, and his countenance bore an expression of gentle and melancholy resignation. It was evident that his resolution, so unsettled the evening before, was now fixed. Emmanuel approached him joyfully ; Leone received him with a sweet but sad smile.

" Well ? " asked Emmanuel.

" Well, Monseigneur, I have a favor to ask of you."

" What is it, Leone ? "

" You know my weakness and my unfitness for all exercises of the body. In your almost royal future you will have need of strong men like Scianca-Ferro, and will have no use for feeble and timid children like me, Monseigneur — " Though he made an effort to control himself, his agitation increased, and tears ran down his cheeks. " Monseigneur, I have a singular favor to ask of you ; I want to leave you."

Emmanuel started back ; he had passed his whole life with Scianca-Ferro and Leone, and had never contemplated a separation from either of these two friends. " Leave me ? " he said to Leone in utter astonishment.

Leone did not answer, and hung his head.

" Leave me ? " repeated Emmanuel, in a tone of deepest sorrow. " You leave me ? Impossible ! "

" It must be," said Leone, in an almost inaudible voice.

Emmanuel, like a man who feels that he is losing his senses, put his hand to his head, looked at the altar, and let his arms fall heavily by his side. For some moments he had questioned himself. Then he had questioned God ; and as he could obtain no answer from earth or from heaven, he fell back into despair.

"Leave me?" he said for the third time, as if he could not get accustomed to these words, — "me, who found you dying, Leone, who received you as if you had been sent by Providence, who have always treated you as a brother! Oh!"

"It is for that very reason, Monseigneur; it is because I owe you much, and in remaining with you cannot repay you what I owe you, — it is for this reason that I would like to spend all my life in praying for my benefactor."

"Pray for me!" said Emmanuel, more and more astonished. "And where would you pray?"

"In some holy monastery, which seems to me a more suitable place for a poor orphan like me than that which I should occupy in a brilliant court such as yours will be."

"My mother, my dear mother," murmured Emmanuel, "you who loved me so well, what would you say if you heard this?"

"In the presence of God, who hears us," said Leone, laying his hand solemnly on the young prince's arm, "I assure you she would say that I am right."

In this reply of Leone there was such an accent of truth, such an expression of solemn conviction that Emmanuel was shaken by it.

"Leone," he said, "you are free to do as you wish. I have tried to capture your heart, but I have never tried to enslave your body. I only ask you not to decide hastily; take a week, take —"

"Oh," said Leone, "if I do not go now when God gives me strength to leave you, Emmanuel, I shall never go; and I tell you I *must* go."

"Must go! But why must you go?"

This question was met by Leone with the same obstinate silence which he had maintained on two former

occasions,—once when at the village of Oleggio the duchess had questioned him concerning his parents and his birth, and also when at Genoa, Emmanuel had asked him his reason for refusing Charles V.'s diamond. Nevertheless Emmanuel was on the point of insisting upon an answer, when he heard a strange step in the church.

It was a servant, who brought word that Duke Charles wished to see him instantly. Important despatches had just been received from France.

"You see, Leone," Emmanuel said to the child, "I must leave you now. I will see you again this evening; and if you persist in your resolution, Leone, well, you shall be free to go, my child; you may go to-morrow, or to-night even, if you think it your duty to go immediately."

Leone did not answer, but sank on his knees and sobbed as if his heart would break.

Emmanuel went away, but he could not help looking back to see if the child suffered as much in seeing him go as he himself suffered in going.

Leone remained alone in prayer for another hour, and returned home more calm. In Emmanuel's absence, his resolution, so unsettled while the young prince was with him, was restored to him by that angel with the heart of ice called reason. But once in his chamber, the idea that Emmanuel might come at any moment to make a last attempt at persuading him to alter his decision, disturbed the boy. At every sound he heard on the staircase he started; every step which sounded in the corridor seemed, as it passed his door, to tread upon his heart.

Two hours passed, and he heard a step. Oh! this time Leone had no doubt, for he had recognized the step. The door opened, and Emmanuel entered. He was sad,

but there was in the expression of his face a gleam of joy whose light even his sadness could not extinguish.

"Well, Leone," asked Emmanuel, after closing the door, "have you reflected?"

"Monseigneur," replied Leone, "when you left me I had already reflected."

"So you persist in leaving me?"

Leone was not able to answer; he bowed his head in sign of assent.

"And you are going to leave me," continued Emmanuel, with a melancholy smile, "because I am going to be a great prince and to have a brilliant court?"

Leone once more bowed his head.

"Well," said Emmanuel, somewhat bitterly, "reassure yourself on this point, Leone. I am to-day poorer and of less importance than ever before."

Leone looked up, and Emmanuel could see the astonishment beaming from his fine eyes through his tears.

"The second son of the King of France, the Duc d'Orléans, is dead," said Emmanuel; "so that the treaty of Crespy is nullified."

"And — and ?" demanded Leone, with eager curiosity visible in every line of his face.

"And," replied Emmanuel, "as the Emperor Charles V., my uncle, will not give up the duchy of Milan to my cousin François I., my cousin François I. will not restore to my father his dominions."

"But," inquired Leone, in a tone of intense anxiety, "the marriage with King Ferdinand's daughter, that marriage proposed by the emperor himself, will still take place?"

"My poor Leone," said the young man, "the emperor wished to marry his niece to the Comte de Bresse, Prince of Piedmont, Duke of Savoy,— to a princely hus-

band in short, but not to the poor Emmanuel Philibert, who of all his possessions has only the city of Nice, the valley of Aosta, and three or four paltry towns scattered about through Savoy and Piedmont."

"Oh!" cried Leone, with an expression of joy impossible to suppress. But almost immediately recovering the self-control he had nearly lost, he said, "It does not matter; that can make no change in my determination."

"So," said Emmanuel, sadder and more cast down at the boy's resolution than he had been at the news of the loss of his estates, "you still wish to leave me, Leone?"

"What was my duty yesterday is still my duty to-day, Emmanuel."

"Yesterday, Leone, I was rich, powerful, and the heir to a ducal crown; to-day I am poor, I am despoiled, and possess only my sword. In leaving me yesterday, Leone, you would have been cruel; in leaving me to-day, you are ungrateful. Adieu, Leone."

"Ungrateful?" exclaimed Leone. "Oh, my God, thou hearest him; he says that I am ungrateful!" Then as the young prince was leaving the room with stern face and frowning brow,—

"Oh, Emmanuel, Emmanuel," cried Leone, "do not leave me so; it will kill me!"

Emmanuel turned and saw the boy standing with arms stretched toward him, pale, trembling, and almost fainting. He sprang forward, caught the boy in his arms, and giving way to an impulse for which he could not account, pressed his lips to those of Leone.

Leone uttered a wild cry of pain, as if a red-hot iron had touched him, and then sank back fainting. The clasp of his doublet pressed upon his throat. Emmanuel unfastened it; then, as the boy was choking in his stiff

ruff, he tore it off, and in order to give him air, he burst off all the buttons of his shirt. Then it was Emmanuel's turn to cry out,—not with grief, but with surprise, astonishment, and joy.

Leone was a woman!

When she came to herself she was no longer Leone; henceforth Emmanuel Philibert was the lover of Leona. There was no further question in the poor child's mind of separation from her lover, by whom without a word of explanation everything was understood,—her melancholy solitude, and her desire for flight. When Leona discovered that she loved Emmanuel Philibert, she had wished to go away; but the moment she knew that the young man returned her love, she devoted to him her life. To the world the page continued to be a young man, and was called Leone. To Emmanuel Philibert alone, Leone was a beautiful young girl called Leona.

As prince, Emmanuel Philibert had lost Bresse, Piedmont, and all Savoy with the exception of Nice, the valley of Aosta, and the city of Vercelli. But as man he had lost nothing, since God had given Scianca-Ferro and Leona; that is to say, the two most magnificent gifts which in his divine liberality God could bestow upon one of his elect,—devotion and love.

CHAPTER X.

THE THREE MESSAGES.

LET us now devote a few lines to the political events of the period included between the date on which the scene took place which we have just related, and that of the opening of our story.

Emmanuel Philibert had told Leone that he had nothing left but his sword.

Open demonstrations by the league of the Protestants of Germany which was formed by John Frederick, Elector of Saxony, who was disturbed by the gradual encroachments of the Empire, gave the young prince an occasion for again offering to the emperor the service of his sword, which this time was accepted.

The Protestant princes maintained, as a pretext for their procedure, that during the life of the emperor his brother Ferdinand could not become King of the Romans.

The league was formed in the little town of Schmalkalden, situated in the province of Henneberg, and belonging to the Landgrave of Hesse; it took its name from the town, and is known as the Smalkald League. Henry VIII. had some scruples, and refused to join; Francois I., on the contrary, entered into it heartily. The league had held its first meeting Dec. 22, 1530.

Soliman also was concerned in this league. In fact, he had given it his support in laying siege to Messina in

1532. But Charles V. had marched against him with an army of four hundred and thirty thousand infantry and thirty thousand horse, and had forced him to raise the siege. Then with the aid of the plague, he had destroyed Francois I.'s army in Italy ; the consequence of which was the treaty of Cambrai on the 5th of August in one quarter, and in another the treaty of Nuremberg, July 23, 1532, which had for a short time restored peace to Europe.

The short duration of treaties made with Francois I. is well known. The treaty of Nuremberg had been broken ; and the Smalkald League, which had had time to collect all its forces, had begun to manifest itself.

The emperor marched in person against the Smalkaldistes. The affairs of Germany always seemed to interest him more than those of any other country. It was because Charles V. well understood that since the decadence of the papacy the Empire was the greatest power in the world.

It was under these circumstances that on the 27th of May, 1545, Emmanuel Philibert set out to join the emperor at Worms. The young prince, as usual, was accompanied by Scianca-Ferro and Leone.

He was followed by forty gentlemen, — the largest army that could be raised in the dominions of the man who still bore the titles of Duke of Savoy, Chablais, and Aosta, Prince of Piedmont, Achaia, and the Morea, Count of Geneva, Nice, Asti, Bresse, and Romont, Baron of Vaud, Gex, and Faucigny, Seigneur of Vercelli, Beaufort, Bugey, and Freiburg, Prince and perpetual vicegerent of the Empire, Marquis of Italy, and King of Cyprus !

Charles V. received his nephew most graciously, and permitted him to be addressed in his presence as "Your Majesty," on account of his father's claim to the king-

dom of Cyprus, for which kind reception Emmanuel Philibert repaid by prodigies of valor at the battles of Ingoldstadt and Muhlberg. This last battle ended the struggle. Ten of the forty men were unable to answer the call of their commander Emmanuel Philibert ; they were either dead or wounded.

As for Scianca-Ferro, recognizing in the midst of the combat the Elector John Frederick, by his powerful horse, his gigantic figure, and the fury of his fighting, he singled him out as an adversary ; and certainly the young man would have won his name of Scianca-Ferro this day, if it had not been his long before. With one blow of his terrible battle-axe he broke the prince's right arm ; then with a stroke of his two-edged sword he cleft his helmet, at the same time cutting his face, and so disfiguring it that when the prisoner raised the mutilated visor of his helmet before the emperor, he was obliged to give his name. His face was one terrible wound.

A month before this, François I. on his death-bed had said to his son that all the misfortunes of France had come from his alliance with the Protestants and Turks ; and avowing that Charles V. had Almighty God on his side, he had advised the future king to live in peace with the emperor.

Upon the death of François I. a brief period of inactivity ensued, of which Emmanuel took advantage to pay his father a visit at Vercelli. The interview was full of tenderness and affection, — doubtless by reason of a presentiment on the duke's part, that he was embracing his son for the last time.

François I.'s advice to Henri II. made but little impression on the mind of this king, who, without military genius, had a passion for war ; and after the assassination

of the Duc de Plaisance, that Paul Lodovico Farnese, eldest son of Paul III., of whom we have already spoken, war broke out afresh in Italy.

The duke was assassinated at Plaisance, in 1548, by Pallavicini, Landi, Anguisola, and Gonfalonieri, who, immediately after the assassination, delivered up the town to Ferdinand di Gonzaga, governor of the Milanese under Charles V.

On the other hand, Ottavio Farnese, second son of Paul III., had seized upon Parma, and that he might not be obliged to give it up, had invoked the protection of King Henri II.

Now, during the lifetime of Paul Lodovico, Charles V. had always claimed Parma and Plaisance, as cities belonging to the duchy of Milan. This was the subject of their contention at Nice with Pope Paul III.

Nothing more was necessary to incite war, which broke out at the same time in Italy and the Netherlands.

It was in Flanders, as before, that Charles V. united his forces; therefore our eyes naturally turned to the North to search for Emmanuel Philibert at the beginning of this book.

We have related how after the siege of Metz and the capture of Thérouanne and Hesdin, the emperor, while charging his nephew to rebuild this last city, had appointed him general-in-chief of his army in Flanders, and governor of the Netherlands. Then, as if to counterbalance this great honor, a supreme sorrow had overwhelmed Emmanuel Philibert. His father, the Duke of Savoy, had died on the 17th of September, 1553.

It is in this capacity of general-in-chief, and with that sorrow at the death of his father, if not expressed in his dress, at least, like that of Hamlet, imprinted on his face, that we have seen him set out from the imperial camp;

and it is after exacting respect for his authority, like Romulus of old, that we see him returning.

A messenger from Charles V. was waiting before his tent ; the emperor desired to speak with him instantly.

Emmanuel sprang to the ground, flung the bridle to one of his followers, and assuring with a nod his squire and page that he would return immediately after his interview with the emperor, unfastened his sword-belt, put his sword under his arm, as was his custom when on foot,—so that if it were necessary to unsheathe his sword, the hilt would be within reach of his hand,—and took his way to the tent of the modern Cæsar.

The sentry presented arms, and he entered preceded by the messenger, who went to announce him to the emperor.

The emperor's tent was divided into four compartments, without counting a sort of antechamber, or rather portico, sustained by four pillars. These four compartments served, respectively, for dining-room, drawing-room, bedroom, and study. Each one had been furnished by gift of some city, and was ornamented by a trophy of some victory.

The only trophy in the emperor's bedchamber was the sword of François I., which hung by the head of his bed. This was a very simple trophy, but it had more value in the eyes of Charles V.—who carried this sword with him to the monastery of Saint-Just—than all the trophies of the other rooms put together.

The writer of these lines has often held and drawn, with sad and melancholy glance backward into the past, this sword possessed by François I., who surrendered it, by Charles V., who captured it, and by Napoleon, who took it again. How insignificant are the things of this world ! That sword, after being almost the only dowry of a fallen

princess, is to-day the property of a servant of Catherine II. ! O François I. ! O Charles V. ! O Napoleon !

In the antechamber, although he had only passed through it, Emmanuel Philibert — with that practised eye which sees everything at a glance — observed a man whose hands were bound behind his back and who was guarded by four soldiers. He was dressed in peasant's clothes ; but as his head was uncovered, Emmanuel Philibert thought that neither his hair nor his skin was in keeping with his dress. He thought that he must be a French spy who had just been arrested and with regard to whom the emperor had sent for him.

Charles V. was in his study, and the duke was immediately conducted to him.

Charles V., born at the beginning of the sixteenth century, was at this time a man fifty-five years of age, who, although short, was powerfully built, and whose keen eyes sparkled beneath his eyebrows, whenever pain did not obscure their light. His hair was turning gray ; but his beard, thick rather than long, was still fiery red.

He was lying upon a sort of Turkish divan covered with stuffs from the Orient captured in Soliman's tent before Vienna. Within reach of his hand glittered a trophy of poniards and Arab cimeters. He was enveloped in a long dressing-gown of black velvet, lined with sable. The expression of his countenance was gloomy, and he appeared to await with impatience the arrival of Emmanuel Philibert. When the duke was announced, however, this expression of impatience instantly disappeared, as a cloud which obscures the light of the sun is dispelled by a breath of the north wind.

During his forty years' reign the emperor had learned the art of controlling his countenance, and it must be confessed that no one could be more skilled in that

art than he ; but at the first glance Emmanuel understood that the emperor had serious matters under consideration.

Charles V., on perceiving his nephew, turned toward him, and making an effort to change his position, he nodded a friendly welcome. Emmanuel Philibert bowed respectfully.

The emperor began the conversation in Italian. He who regretted all his life that he had never been able to learn Latin or Greek, spoke equally well five modern languages : Italian, Spanish, English, Flemish, and French. He himself explained the use he made of these five different languages. "I learned Italian," he said, "in order to converse with the pope ; Spanish, in which to talk with my mother Jeanne ; English, to use when with my aunt Catherine ; Flemish, for intercourse with my fellow-citizens and friends ; finally, French, for talking to myself."

However urgent might be his business with those whom he summoned to wait upon him, the emperor always began by making some remarks relative to their own affairs. "Well," he asked in Italian, "what news from the camp?"

"Sire," replied Emmanuel Philibert, in the same language Charles V. had used, and which, moreover, was his maternal tongue, "something has occurred, the tidings of which would soon reach you if I did not bring them myself. In order to enforce respect for my position and your authority, I have been obliged to vindicate them by an example of justice."

"An example of justice!" repeated the emperor absently, already preoccupied with his own thoughts ; "and what was that?"

Emmanuel Philibert began the story of his affair with

Count Waldeck. But it was evident that Charles V. was listening only with his ears ; his thoughts were elsewhere.

"Good!" he said for the third time, when Emmanuel Philibert had finished ; but, plunged in his own thoughts, he probably had not heard a word of his general's report. Indeed, during the whole narration the emperor, no doubt to conceal his preoccupation, had been watching the fingers of his right hand while trying to move them, which he did with difficulty, so twisted and deformed were they with the gout.

The gout was Charles V.'s real enemy, as bitter against him in its way as Soliman, François I., and Henri II. The gout and Luther were the two demons constantly with him, and he put them both in the same category.

"Ah, if it were not for Luther and my gout," he would say, stroking his red beard as he dismounted from his horse, broken up by the fatigue of a long ride or of a hard-fought battle,— "ah, if it were not for Luther and my gout, how I should sleep to-night!"

There was a short silence between Emmanuel's narration and the renewal of the conversation by the emperor ; but at length, turning to his nephew, he said, "I also have news to give you, and bad news!"

"Whence, your Majesty?"

"From Rome."

"The pope has been elected?"

"Yes."

"And his name?"

"Pietro Caraffa. He whose place he fills was exactly of my age, Emmanuel, — born in the same year as I, — Marcellus II. Poor Marcellus! does not his death warn me to prepare to leave this world?"

"Sire," said Emmanuel, "I think you should not dwell upon this event, or look upon Pope Marcellus's death as you would upon that of an ordinary mortal. Marcellus Cervini was healthy and robust, and probably would have lived a hundred years as cardinal; but when the Cardinal Marcellus Cervini became Pope Marcellus II., he died in twenty days!"

"Yes, I know that," replied Charles V., thoughtfully; "the anxieties of his office were too much for him. He was crowned with the tiara on Good Friday, the same day on which our Lord was crowned with thorns. That must have brought him misfortune. But I am less concerned at his death than at the election of Paul IV."

"And yet, if I am not mistaken, Sire," said Emmanuel Philibert, "Paul IV. is a Neapolitan,—that is to say, a subject of your Majesty?"

"Yes, certainly; but I have always heard evil reports of that cardinal, and while he was at the court of Spain I myself had trouble with him. Ah," continued Charles V., with an expression of fatigue, "I must renew with him the struggle which I have maintained with his predecessors for twenty years, and for which I have no longer the strength."

"Oh, Sire!"

Charles V. fell into a reverie, from which he almost immediately roused himself. "And to be sure," he added, as if speaking to himself, and sighing, "perhaps I may be mistaken in regard to this man as in the case of other popes; they are almost always different from what they were as cardinals. I believed Clement II. to be a peaceable man, courageous, and loyal. Well, the moment he becomes pope, he finds fault with me at every turn; his disposition becomes restless, fickle, and meddlesome.

On the contrary, I supposed that Julius III. would neglect business for pleasure, that he would devote himself to sports and fêtes ; *peccato !* never was a pope more diligent, more attentive to business, or more indifferent to the pleasures of this world than he ! What trouble they gave us in that matter of the marriage of Philippe II. with his cousin Mary Tudor ! If we had not stopped that mad Cardinal Pole at Augsburg, who knows whether the marriage would ever have been consummated ? Ah, poor Marcellus ! ” said the emperor, with a heavier sigh than before, “ it is not necessary to ascribe to the date of your coronation day (Good Friday) the fact that you survived your throning only twenty days ; it was enough that you were my friend ! ”

“ Time will show, august Emperor,” said Emmanuel Philibert ; “ your Majesty admits having been mistaken as to Clement VII. and Julius III., and you may be agreeably disappointed in Paul IV.”

“ God grant it may be so, but I doubt it.”

A noise was heard outside.

“ What is the matter now ? ” demanded Charles V., impatiently. “ I gave orders that we were not to be disturbed. See what is wanted, Emmanuel.”

The duke raised the portière, and after communicating with some person in the next room, turned toward the emperor, saying, “ Sire, it is a messenger from Spain, — from Tordesillas.”

“ Oh, let him come in, my boy ; he probably brings news from my mother.”

The messenger made his appearance.

“ You bring news of my mother, do you not ? ” said Charles V. in Spanish to the messenger.

The messenger, without answering, handed a letter to Emmanuel Philibert, who took it.

"Give it to me, Emmanuel, give it to me. She is well, is she not?"

The messenger was silent; and Emmanuel hesitated about giving the letter to Charles V., for he observed that it was sealed with black. Charles V. also saw it and shuddered.

"Ha!" he said, "this is the first misfortune to follow Paul IV.'s election. Give it to me, my boy," he continued, extending his hand to Emmanuel.

Emmanuel obeyed; to hesitate longer would be puerile.

"Sire," he said, handing the letter to Charles V., "remember that you are a man."

"Yes," replied Charles V., "that is what was said to the ancient conquerors." And trembling all over, he opened the letter. It contained but a few lines.

Tears dimmed his sight; his faded eyes, dried up by ambition, were themselves astonished at this miracle which renewed their acquaintance with tears. When he had finished he handed the letter to Emmanuel Philibert, and sinking down upon his couch, said, "Dead! she died on the 13th of April, 1555, the very day of Caraffa's coronation! Ah, my son, I told you that that man would bring me misfortune!"

Emmanuel glanced over the letter, which was signed by the royal notary of Tordesillas, and announced the death of Charles V.'s mother, Joanna of Castile, better known in history by the name of Joanna the Mad. He stood a moment motionless in the presence of this great sorrow,—which he could not alleviate, for Charles V. worshipped his mother. "Sire," he murmured at last, "recall what you so kindly said to me, when, two years ago, I had the misfortune to lose my father."

"Yes; one says those things," replied the emperor. "We can always find consolation for others, but

when our turn comes, we are powerless to console ourselves."

"Well, then, I will not try to console you, Sire," said Emmanuel. "On the contrary, I will say, 'Weep, weep, you are only a man !'"

"How unhappy a life hers was, Emmanuel !" said Charles V. "In 1496 she married my father Philippe le Beau, whom she adored ; in 1506 he died, poisoned by a glass of water which he drank while playing tennis ; and she became mad from grief. During ten years she was constantly expecting my father's resurrection, which to console her a Carthusian friar had promised her ; and for ten years she never went out of Tordesillas, except when, in 1516, she met me at Villa-Viciosa, and with her own hand placed the crown of Spain upon my head. Insane with sorrow at the loss of her husband, her reason returned at times on any occurrence of interest to her son. Poor mother ! Certainly my whole reign will bear witness to my respect for her. For forty years I have undertaken nothing in Spain without taking counsel with her ; she was not always able to advise me, but it was my duty to consult her, and I did so. Do you know that, Spaniard of the Spaniards as she was, at the time of my birth she came to Flanders to be confined, so that I might one day become emperor in the place of my grandfather Maximilian ? Do you know that, strong as was her maternal instinct, she denied herself the pleasure of nursing me, lest, if for no other reason than that I had suckled her milk, I might be accused of being too much Spanish ? And, indeed, my having been the foster-child of Anne Sterel and a citizen of Ghent are my two principal titles to the imperial crown. Well, from before the time of my birth, all that had been provided for by my mother. What can I do for her now after her death ? Give her

magnificent funeral ceremonies? She shall have them. But to be Emperor of Germany, King of Spain, Naples, Sicily, and the two Indies, to be ruler over an empire on which the sun never sets, as my flatterers say, and yet powerless to do anything for a dead mother except to provide for her magnificent obsequies! — ah, Emmanuel, the power of the most powerful man is circumscribed indeed!"

At this moment the portière was drawn again, and disclosed an officer covered with dust, and who seemed to be the bearer of important tidings. The expression of the emperor's countenance was so sad that the usher, who realizing the importance of the tidings brought by this third messenger had, contrary to etiquette, conducted him to Charles V.'s study, stopped him short; but Charles V. had already seen the officer covered with dust.

"Come in," he said in Flemish, "what do you want?"

"Your Majesty," said the officer, bowing, "King Henri II. has taken the field with three different divisions of his army,— the first under his own command and that of Constable de Montmorency, the second under Maréchal de Saint-André, and the third under Duc de Nevers."

"Well, what else?" asked the emperor.

"The King of France has besieged and taken Marienbourg, and is now marching upon Bouvines."

"And on what day did he lay siege to Marienbourg?"

"On the 13th of April, your Majesty."

"Well," said Charles V., in French, and turning to Emmanuel, "what do you say to the date?"

"It is a fatal one, indeed!"

"That will do, Monsieur," said Charles V. to the messenger; "you may go." Then he said to the usher,

"Let that gentleman be cared for as if he were the bearer of good news. Go!"

This time Emmanuel did not wait to be questioned. Even before the curtain had closed, he said : "Fortunately, august Emperor, although we cannot help the election of Paul IV., although we cannot prevent the death of your beloved mother, at least we can do something to redeem the capture of Marienbourg."

"And what can we do?"

"Retake it, *pardieu!*"

"Yes, you may, Emmanuel, but not I."

"Why not you, your Majesty?"

Charles V. slid from his sofa and endeavored to walk, but it was with pain and difficulty that he accomplished a few steps. Then shaking his head, he turned toward his nephew, saying, "Look at my legs, Emmanuel ; they will no longer support me on foot or on horseback. Look at my hands ; they can no longer clasp a sword. And it is my opinion, Emmanuel, that he who cannot hold a sword is not fit to wield a sceptre."

"What are you saying, Sire ?" exclaimed Emmanuel, in astonishment.

"Something which I have been contemplating, and which I still intend. Emmanuel, everything warns me that it is time to resign my place to another. The surprise at Innspruck, where I was obliged to fly half naked ; the retreat from Metz, where I lost a third of my army and half of my reputation ; and finally, you see, this terrible disease, which no human strength can resist, which medicine cannot cure, — this cruel, pitiless disease, which seizes upon the whole body from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, which contracts the nerves with intolerable pain, which penetrates the very bones, freezes the marrow, and converts into solid chalk

that beneficent oil deposited in our joints by nature to facilitate their motion, — this enemy, more cruel than fire or sword, or than any instrument of war, and which destroys peace of mind and freedom of soul through mere excess of physical suffering, — this disease cries out to me incessantly : ‘Enough of power ! enough of sovereignty ! Retire into obscurity of life before entering the darkness of the tomb ! Charles, by divine grace Emperor of the Romans, Charles the August, Charles, King of Germany, Castile, Leon, Grenada, Aragon, Naples, Sicily, Majorca, Sardinia, the Indies, and of islands both of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, make way for another, — for another ! ’ ”

Emmanuel was about to speak, but the emperor stopped him by a gesture.

“ And then — and then,” continued Charles V., “ there is something else I had to tell you ! As if the dissolution of this poor body was too slow for the wishes of my enemies, — as if I had not suffered enough with defeats, heresies, and the gout, — there must also be added assassination ! ”

“ What ! assassination ? ” exclaimed Emmanuel.

The emperor’s face clouded. “ An attempt to assassinate me was made to-day,” he said.

“ There has been an attempt to assassinate your Majesty ? ” said Emmanuel, in terror.

“ Why not ? ” replied Charles V., with a smile. “ Did you not tell me just now to remember that I was a man ? ”

“ Oh ! ” cried Emmanuel, hardly recovered from the emotion caused by this piece of news, “ who is the villain ? ”

“ Ah, yes,” said the emperor, “ that is the question, — who is the villain ? I have the poniard, but not the hand.”

"In fact, that man whom I saw just now bound in the antechamber —"

"Is the villain, as you call him, Emmanuel. But by whom was he sent? By the Turk? I do not believe it. Soliman is a loyal enemy. Henri III.? I do not even suspect him. Paul IV.? It is so short a time since he was elected,—and then the popes, they generally prefer poison to the poniard: Ecclesia abhorret a sanguine. Ottavio Farnese? He is too insignificant a fellow to attack me, the imperial bird which Maurice did not dare to capture, knowing, as he said, no cage strong enough in which to confine it. Is he the tool of the Lutherans of Augsbourg, or the Calvinists of Geneva? I am at a loss, but I would give much to know. Listen, Emmanuel; this man refuses to answer any questions. Take him to your tent,—I hand him over to you; but you understand?—he must be made to speak. The more important an enemy is, and the nearer home, the more important it is to know him." Then, after a moment's pause, he fixed his eyes upon Emmanuel Philibert, who was looking thoughtfully upon the ground. "By the way," he said, "your cousin Philippe II. has arrived at Brussels."

The change of conversation was so sudden that Emmanuel started. He looked up and met the gaze of the emperor, and this time he shuddered.

"Well?" he asked.

"Well," replied Charles V., "I shall be glad to see my son again! Might it not be said that he divines that the moment is favorable,—that the time has come to succeed me? But before I see him, Emmanuel, I recommend to your care my assassin."

"In an hour," replied Emmanuel, "your Majesty shall know all that you desire to know." And bowing before

the emperor, who held out his maimed hand, Emmanuel withdrew, convinced that the event of which Charles V. had spoken only by way of supplement to the conversation was really the one to which he attached the most importance.

CHAPTER XI.

ODOARDO MARAVIGLIA.

IN withdrawing through the antechamber, Emmanuel looked more carefully at the prisoner, and was confirmed in his former idea that he had to deal with a gentleman. He beckoned the sergeant to approach, and said to him, "My friend, by the emperor's orders you are to bring this man to my tent in five minutes."

Emmanuel did not need to use Charles V.'s name ; every one knew that the latter had delegated to him his authority, and as a general thing the soldiers, who adored him, obeyed him as readily as they obeyed the emperor himself.

"Your order shall be executed, your Highness," replied the sergeant ; and the duke went to his own quarters. His tent was not like the emperor's, — a splendid pavilion divided into four compartments ; it was an ordinary soldier's tent divided in the middle by a canvas partition. Scianca-Ferro was seated at the entrance.

"Stay where you are," Emmanuel said to him, "but take a weapon of some sort."

"What for ?" asked Scianca-Ferro.

"In a few minutes a man who has attempted to assassinate the emperor will be brought here ; I am going to examine him alone. Notice him when he comes in ; and if he tries to escape after giving me his word of honor, stop him, — but alive, you understand ? It is important to take him alive."

"Then," said Scianca-Ferro, "I do not see that I need any weapon at all ; my arms will be sufficient."

"As you like ; only stop him."

"Never fear," said Scianca-Ferro.

Scianca-Ferro had continued on terms of intimacy with his foster-brother ; or rather the latter, faithful to the traditions of his youth, had required Scianca-Ferro to treat him familiarly.

The prince entered his tent, and found Leona waiting for him. As he was alone, and as the curtain of the tent had closed after him, Leona came to meet him with open arms. "Here you are at last, my dear ! What a terrible scene we passed through this morning ! Alas, you were right in saying that from my paleness and emotion I might be taken for a woman."

"Yes, Leoua ; and yet such scenes are common in a soldier's life, and you ought to be accustomed to them by this time." Then, with a smile, he added, "Take an example from Scianca-Ferro."

"How can you say such things, even in joke, Emmanuel ? Scianca-Ferro is a man. He loves you as well as one man can love another, I know ; but my love for you, Emmanuel, is inexpressible ; it is something I could not live without ! I love you as the flower loves the dew, as the bird the woods, as the dawn the sun. With you, I live, I love ! Without you, I live no longer ! "

"My dear Leona," said Emmanuel, "I know very well that you are all devotion and love. I know that although you are by my side, you really are one with me. It is for this reason that I have neither reserve nor secrets from you."

"Why do you say that ?"

"Because a man who is a great criminal will soon be

brought here for me to examine ; because, perhaps, the revelations he will make may compromise even crowned heads. Go to the other part of my tent. You may listen, if you wish ; it is the same as if I alone heard it."

Leona slightly shrugged her shoulders. " You are the only person in the world to me," she said ; and kissing her hand to her lover, she retired behind the partition. She was just in time. The five minutes were up ; and with a very military punctuality, the sergeant arrived, bringing his prisoner.

Emmanuel received him seated, and half hidden in the shadow, looking out of which he saw the assassin for the third time ; but this time his gaze was long and searching.

The prisoner was a man from thirty to thirty-five years old, tall, and so distinguished in appearance that Emmanuel had instantly recognized him as a gentleman, in spite of his disguise.

" Leave Monsieur alone with me," said the prince to the sergeant.

As the sergeant went out with his three men, the prisoner fixed his keen eye upon Emmanuel Philibert, who went straight up to him.

" Monsieur," said the duke, " the soldiers did not perceive your rank, and they have bound you. You will give me your word of honor as a gentleman that you will not try to escape, and I will untie your hands."

" I am a peasant, and not a gentleman," answered the assassin, " and therefore I cannot give you my word of honor as a gentleman."

" If you are a peasant, then you will not bind yourself to anything by giving your word as a gentleman. Do so, then, for it is the only pledge I ask of you."

The prisoner made no answer.

" Then," said Emmanuel, " I shall loosen your hands

without your word of honor. I am not afraid to be alone with any man, whether he has pledged his word or not." And the duke began to untie his hands.

The stranger started back. "Wait!" he said. "On the word of a gentleman I will not try to escape."

"Ah!" said Emmanuel Philibert, smiling, "dogs, horses, and men can recognize one another;" and he finished untying the cord. "There, you are free; now let us talk."

The prisoner looked down indifferently at his hands cut by the cords; then letting them fall by his side, said ironically, "Let us talk? And what about?"

"About the motives that led you to commit this crime."

"I have said nothing," replied the unknown, "and I have nothing to say."

"You said nothing to the emperor, whom you intended to kill,—that is but natural; you said nothing to the soldiers who arrested you,—I can understand that; but to me, a gentleman who treats you not as a common assassin but as a gentleman, you will tell everything."

"Of what use would it be?"

"Of what use? I will tell you, Monsieur. It will prevent my looking upon you as a man hired by some coward to commit a crime which he did not dare to perpetrate himself. Of what use? It will enable you to be beheaded like a gentleman, instead of being hanged like a thief and an assassin."

"They threatened me with the torture to make me speak. Let them try!"

"The torture would be a useless cruelty. You would submit to it without speaking; you would be mutilated without being conquered; you would keep your secret and leave the shame to your tormentors. No; that is not

what I wish. I wish for confidence and truth ; I wish you to speak to me, a gentleman, general, and prince, as you would to your confessor ; and if you think me unworthy your confidence, it is because you are one of those scoundrels with whom I am unwilling to confound you, and because the deed which you attempted was prompted by some base passion which you dare not confess ; it is because — ”

The prisoner drew himself up, and interrupting Emmanuel, said, “ My name is Odoardo Maraviglia, Monsieur ! Refresh your memory, and insult me no longer.”

At the name of Odoardo Maraviglia, Emmanuel heard something like a stifled cry in the other room of the tent, but supposed it to be the slight noise made by some object grazing the canvas partition. And the memories which crowded on his mind at hearing this name left him little time to think of other things, for the name of Maraviglia had been the pretext for the war which had despoiled him of his estates.

“ Odoardo Maraviglia ! ” he said. “ Is it possible that you are the son of the ambassador from France to Milan ; the son of Francesco Maraviglia ? ”

“ I am his son.”

Emmanuel went back in thought to his early youth. The name was familiar to him, but it threw no light on the present situation.

“ Your name is certainly that of a gentleman,” said Emmanuel, “ but it brings to my mind no circumstance which bears in any way upon this crime of which you are accused.”

Odoardo smiled disdainfully. “ Ask the most august emperor if his memory is as blank as yours.”

“ Excuse me, Monsieur,” said Emmanuel, “ but at the time Comte Francesco Maraviglia disappeared I was but

a child scarcely eight years old ; it is not, therefore, strange that I am ignorant of the details of an affair which, as I think I recall, remained a mystery to the whole world."

" Well, Monsieur, I will elucidate this mystery. You know how that contemptible Prince Sforza was always vacillating between François I. and Charles V. according as the God of victory favored the one or the other. My father, Francesco Maraviglia, was sent envoy extraordinary from François I. to the court of Sforza. This was in 1534. The emperor was in Africa ; the Duke of Saxony, an ally of François I., had just made peace with the King of the Romans ; Clement VII., another ally of France, had just excommunicated Henry VIII., King of England ; in fact, the whole current of events in Italy was against Charles. Sforza abandoned Charles V., to whom he still owed four hundred thousand ducats, and placed his political fortunes in the hands of the envoy extraordinary of François I.

" This was a great triumph, of which Francesco Maraviglia had the imprudence to boast. His words were carried across the sea, reached Charles V. at Tunis, and made him tremble.

" But alas, fortune is changeable ! Two months after, Clement VII., who was the main dependence of the French in Italy, died ; and Tunis fell before the arms of the emperor, who led his victorious army back to Italy. It was necessary to find an expiatory victim, and Francesco Maraviglia was destined to be the one. It happened that a quarrel arose between the servants of Comte Maraviglia and some of the Milanese, in which two of the latter were killed. The duke was only waiting for a pretext to fulfil his promise to the emperor. The man who for more than a year had been more the

master of Milan than the duke himself, was arrested as a common malefactor and thrown into prison.

" My mother and sister, a child four years of age, were in Milan with my father; I, being one of the pages of François I., remained in Paris. They dragged my father from my mother's arms without telling the poor woman why he was arrested or where they were taking him. A week passed, during which the countess tried in vain every plan she could devise to discover what had become of her husband. They knew Maraviglia to be immensely rich, and feared that his wife might buy his liberty.

" One night a man knocked at the door of my father's palace and asked to speak to the countess in private. Under the circumstances everything was important; my mother had caused it to be understood throughout the city that she would give five hundred ducats to whomsoever would let her know, by means designated by her, the whereabouts of her husband. Possibly this man who wished to speak with her alone might bring tidings of her husband, and fearing betrayal wished by a private interview to insure secrecy.

" She was not mistaken in her conjecture. The man was one of the jailers of the fortress of Milan, whither my father had been conveyed; he brought not only information of the place where my father was confined, but also a letter from him. My mother paid the five hundred ducats when she recognized the handwriting.

" My father's letter announced his arrest and his solitary confinement, but did not betray serious anxiety. My mother answered, begging him to tell her what to do, and saying that her life and her fortune were at his service. Five nights after this, in the middle of the night the man returned, and having given his signal, was

admitted to the countess. The situation of the prisoner looked more serious ; he had been removed to a different cell, where he was kept in the utmost secrecy. The jailer said that his life was in danger.

"Was it this man's purpose to wring from the countess a large sum of money, or was he telling the truth ? One of these two suppositions must be correct. My mother's terror inclined her to the latter ; and although the man's answer to her questions displayed greed and cupidity, they also bore the semblance of truth.

"She gave him the same sum as before, and told him at all hazards to devise some mode of escape for the count. She promised him that he should receive five thousand ducats as soon as the plan was arranged, and twenty thousand more as soon as her husband was in safety.

"This was a fortune to the jailer, who went away promising to consider her proposition. My mother, from her point of view, contemplated the situation ; she had friends at court, and she learned through them that the count's position was even worse than the jailer had represented. They were about to try him as a spy ! My mother awaited impatiently the jailer's arrival ; she did not know even his name, and if she had known it she could not have sent for him without ruining both the jailer and herself.

"She was, however, somewhat reassured by the fact that there was to be a trial. Of what could the count be accused ? — of the death of the two Milanese ? That had been merely an affair between servants and peasants, with which a gentleman and an envoy could have nothing to do. What made her most uneasy was a vague rumor that there would be no trial at all, but that her husband would be condemned none the less.

"Finally, one night there was a knock at the door at

which my mother started up ; and she awaited on the threshold of her bedchamber her nocturnal visitor, whose peculiar knock she was getting to recognize. He entered with an air more mysterious than usual , he had concerted a plan of escape, and came to submit it to the countess.

"The prisoner's cell was separated from the jailer's quarters by a single dungeon, which communicated with the count's cell by an iron door with a grating at the top, and the man had the keys of both. He proposed, however, to open a passage through the wall of the outside cell into his own room, exactly behind his bed : through this opening he could enter the empty dungeon and pass thence into the count's cell, where he would remove his irons and then lead him out into the jailer's room. There the prisoner would find a rope ladder, by the aid of which he could descend into the moat in the most solitary and obscure part of the fortifications. Here he would find a carriage waiting to carry him out of the country as fast as horses could carry him.

"The plan was a good one, and the countess gave it her approval ; but fearing lest they might deceive the count by telling him that he was free, when really he was still a prisoner, she insisted on seeing herself the execution of this plan. The jailer objected, in consequence of the difficulty of introducing her into the prison ; but the countess overcame this difficulty, showing a permit for herself and her daughter to visit the count, which not having been used was still available. They would come as evening was closing in on the day appointed for the count's flight, and when they left would take advantage of the darkness to slip into the jailer's room instead of leaving the citadel. There she would wait until the moment came for the prisoner's attempt to escape. The

count himself would pay the jailer the rest of the money promised, for the carriage would contain one hundred thousand ducats.

"The jailer was acting in good faith. Before he left the countess, he received the five thousand ducats, and pointed out the place where the carriage should wait under the care of one of her most trustworthy servants. The night of the day after the morrow was fixed upon for the flight.

"But I beg your pardon, Monsieur," said Odoardo, interrupting himself. "I forget that I am speaking to a stranger, for whom these details which so excite my emotion can have no interest."

"You are mistaken, Monsieur," said Emmanuel, "I desire you to search your memory, that I may share with you your recollections ; I am listening."

Odoardo went on : "The two days passed in the terrible anxiety which always precedes the execution of such a project. The countess was consoled by reflecting on the deep interest taken by the jailer in the success of the attempt at escape. A hundred years of fidelity would not pay him so well as this quarter of an hour of treason. The countess feared lest during these last twenty-four hours, which as it seemed to her were passing so slowly, some catastrophe might happen to frustrate their plan, well conceived and ingenious as it was. The time glided on, measured by the hand of eternity ; the hours struck with their usual impassibility, and the time when she was to go to the prison came at last.

"In presence of the countess, everything necessary to the count in his flight was placed in the carriage, so that he need not be obliged to stop on the road ; relays were waiting at Pavia, so that he might be enabled to make thirty leagues without delay. At eleven o'clock the

horses would be harnessed, and at midnight the carriage would arrive at the appointed place.

"Once out of danger, the fugitive would communicate with the countess, and the latter would join him wherever he might be. The hour struck ; face to face with the execution of their plan, the countess found the time had come very soon ! She took her little daughter by the hand, and went on her way to the prison. On the way thither she was disturbed by a fear that as the permit was more than a week old, she would not be allowed to see her husband.

"The countess was mistaken ; she was without any difficulty conducted to the prisoner's cell. The count's situation had not been exaggerated ; there was little doubt of the fate to which he was destined, for the ambassador of François I. was manacled by the feet like a common felon. The interview would have been sad indeed, were it not to be followed by instant and certain flight. During this interview all that had not been arranged was definitely settled.

"The count had determined to risk all on the chance of escape ; he knew that he could expect no mercy, for the emperor had positively demanded his death.

Emmanuel Philibert started. "Are you sure of what you say, Monsieur ?" he asked with severity. "It is a terrible accusation to bring against so great a prince as the Emperor Charles V.!"

"Does your Highness command me to stop, or am I permitted to continue ?"

"Go on ; but why not answer my question ?"

"Because the continuation of my story will render that answer unnecessary."

"Go on then, Monsieur," said Emmanuel Philibert.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT TOOK PLACE IN THE FORTRESS OF MILAN ON THE
NIGHT OF NOV. 14, 1534.

"AT a few minutes before nine," continued Odoardo, "the jailer came to inform the countess that it was time to retire. The sentinel was about to be relieved, and it was best that the same sentinel should see her both enter and leave. The separation was painful; but in three hours they would meet again to be parted no more. The child cried piteously on leaving her father, and the countess was obliged to take her away by force. They passed before the sentinel, and then jailer, wife, and child were lost in the obscurity of the court-yard; from there they proceeded with infinite precaution, and succeeded in gaining the jailer's quarters without being seen. Once there, the jailer shut in an inner room the countess and her daughter, enjoining upon them to preserve the most perfect silence, and to make not the slightest movement, as an inspector might arrive at any moment. The countess and the child remained motionless and mute; one chance movement, one whisper might be sufficient to deprive a husband and father of his life.

"The three hours which remained before midnight seemed to the countess as long as the past forty-eight hours; but at last the jailer opened the door. 'Come,' he said, so softly that the countess understood by the motion of his lips, not what this man said, but what he meant to say.

"The mother would not give up her child ; she wished its father to have an opportunity to give it a last kiss just before going away, and moreover there are moments when even for an empire we would not separate ourselves from those we love.

"This poor mother, who was disputing her husband's life with the executioners, knew not what might happen. She might be forced to flee either with the count or separated from him ; and in either case it would be impossible to part with her child.

"The jailer drew back the bed, and showed an opening about two feet square which had been cut in the wall. It was large enough to allow the escape of all the prisoners of the fortress one after the other. He entered the first cell, followed by the countess and her daughter. After they had passed through the opening, the jailer's wife replaced the bed against the wall ; on it was sleeping a little boy four years of age. The jailer, as I have said, had the key of this first cell ; he opened the door, of which he had taken the precaution to oil the lock and hinges, and they entered the cell occupied by the count. About an hour before a file had been given to the count for cutting his chain ; but being unskilful in such labor, and fearful of alarming the sentinel who was walking in the corridor, his work was scarcely half done. The count embraced his wife and child, and the jailer immediately applied himself to the work of filing the chain. Suddenly he looked up, with one knee on the ground and his body supported by the hand which held the file, extending the other hand in the direction of the door, and listening. The count was about to speak. 'Silence !' said the jailer ; 'something unusual is going on in the fortress.' 'Oh, my God !' murmured the terrified countess. 'Silence !' repeated the jailer.

"Every one was silent ; their suspended breathings seemed to have stopped forever. The four individuals were like a group of bronze representing all the different shades of fear from astonishment to terror. A dull and prolonged noise seemed to be drawing near,—a sound like that of the tramp of many feet ; and the regularity of the step betokened that among these persons some at least were soldiers.

"'Come,' said the jailer, seizing the countess round the waist and dragging her along,—'come ! The governor must be making some nocturnal round of inspection ; but at all events you must not be found here. When the visitors shall have left Monsieur le Comte's cell,—and perhaps they will not enter here,—we will resume our work where we have left it.'

"The countess and her daughter opposed only a feeble resistance ; and the count himself pushed her toward the door. They went out, followed by the jailer, who shut the door behind them. As I have told your Highness, between these two cells there was an iron door, at the top of which was an open grating, through which, thanks to the darkness and the close juxtaposition of the bars, one could see everything without being seen.

"The countess held her daughter in her arms ; and the mother and daughter, scarcely breathing, pressed their faces against the bars to see what was about to take place. The hope which they had for a moment entertained, that the new-comers would not enter the count's cell, had vanished. The cortége had stopped before the door of the cell, and the listeners heard the grating of the key in the lock. The door opened. The countess was on the point of shrieking at the spectacle which met her eyes ; but the jailer, anticipating an outbreak, whispered : 'Not a word, Madame ! Not a syllable, not a movement,

whatever happens ; or — ’ He stopped a moment as if to find a menace which would effectually silence her ; and drawing a long pointed knife from his breast, — ‘ or I will kill your child ! ’ he said. ‘ Villain ! ’ murmured the countess. ‘ Oh,’ replied the jailer, ‘ every one for his own life ; and that of a poor jailer is as valuable in his own eyes as that of a noble countess.’

“ The countess put one hand upon her child’s mouth to insure her silence. As for herself, after the jailer’s threat, there was no danger that she would utter a sound.

“ But what was the sight that had so nearly caused the countess to betray herself ? First, two men dressed in black and bearing torches ; next a man bearing a parchment roll from the lower part of which hung a great red seal ; behind this man stood another man, masked and enveloped in a great brown cloak ; following the masked man came a priest. They entered the cell one by one, and as they entered, exposed to the eyes of the terrified countess, who did not betray her emotion by word or gesture, a group in the corridor which was even more sinister. Opposite the door a man in a party-colored dress of black and red was resting both hands upon the hilt of a long and broad sword, straight and without sheath ; behind him stood six Brothers of Mercy, wearing black robes with hoods nearly covering their faces, and carrying upon their shoulders a coffin, while beyond all these shone the muskets of a dozen soldiers ranged along the wall. The two men bearing torches, the man with the parchment, the masked man, and the priest entered the cell, as I have said ; then the door closed, leaving on the outside the executioner, the Brothers of Mercy, and the soldiers.

“ The count was standing, and his pale face could be

distinguished against the dark background of the prison wall. He looked toward the grating, that his eye might meet the glance of those eyes which, though he could not see them, he divined were pressed in terror against the bars. The sudden and unexpected appearance of this company of men left him no doubt as to the fate to which he was condemned ; and had he retained the slightest hope, it would have been soon dispelled.

"The two men bearing torches stood one on each side of him ; the man who was masked and the priest took a position near the door ; the man holding the parchment came forward, saying, 'Count, do you feel that you are at peace with your God ?' 'As much so as a man can be,' replied the count in a calm voice, 'who has nothing with which to reproach himself—' 'That is well,' continued the man with the parchment, 'for you are condemned to death, and I am here to read your sentence.' 'Pronounced by what tribunal ?' asked the count, scornfully. 'By the all-powerful justice of the duke.' 'On whose accusation ?' 'Upon that of the most august emperor Charles V.' 'It is well ; I am ready to hear the sentence.' 'Kneel, Count ; a man about to die should kneel while listening to his sentence of death.' 'When he is guilty, but not when he is innocent.' 'Count, you are not beyond the common law. On your knees !— or we shall be obliged to use force.' 'Try it !' said the count. 'Let him stand,' said the individual with the mask ; 'only let him cross himself, that he may have the protection of God.' The count started at the sound of this voice. 'Duke Sforza,' said he, turning toward the speaker, 'I thank you.' 'Oh, if it is the duke,' murmured the countess, 'let me implore mercy !' 'Silence, Madame, if you value the life of your child !' whispered the jailer. The countess involun-

tarily sighed. The count heard her and trembled. He ventured in answer to make a gesture with his hand which meant, ‘Courage !’ Then obeying the duke’s advice, he crossed himself, and said in a loud voice, ‘In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost !’ ‘Amen !’ murmured the others.

“Then the man with the parchment began to read the sentence. It was drawn up in the name of the Duke Francesco Maria Sforza, by command of the Emperor Charles V. ; and it condemned Francesco Maraviglia, agent of the King of France, to be executed in his cell at midnight, as a traitor, spy, and divulger of State secrets.

“A second sigh reached the count’s ear,—a sigh so faint that he alone could — not hear it, but divine it.

“He turned his eyes in the direction from which came this sigh of despair. ‘Iniquitous as the sentence is,’ he said, ‘I receive it without fear and without anger ; yet as a man who can no longer defend his life must still defend his honor, I appeal from the sentence of the duke.’ ‘And to whom ?’ asked Sforza. ‘First, to my royal master, François I. ; and secondly, to the future and to God, — to God, to whom all must give account, especially princes, kings, and emperors.’ ‘Is that the only tribunal to which you appeal ?’ asked the duke. ‘Yes,’ replied the count ; ‘and I summon you to appear before that tribunal, Duke Francesco Maria Sforza !’ ‘And when shall that be ?’ asked the duke. ‘At the end of the same period of time that Jacques de Molay, grand master of the Templars, assigned to his judge, — that is to say, in a year and one day. It is to-day the 15th of November, 1534 ; therefore on the 16th of November, 1535, you understand, Duke Francesco Maria Sforza.’

"As he said this, he extended his hand toward the duke in a gesture of denunciation and menace. The face of the duke turned pale under his mask,—for it was indeed the duke who was thus present at the death of his victim. For a moment it was the condemned who triumphed and the judge who trembled before him. 'Enough!' said the duke; 'you have a quarter of an hour to spend with your confessor before your execution;' and he pointed to the priest. 'Try to finish in a quarter of an hour, for the time will not be extended by a single moment.' Then turning to the priest, 'Father,' he said, 'perform your duty.' And he left the cell, followed by the two torch-bearers and the man who carried the parchment. But he left the door wide open, to allow himself and the soldiers to look into the interior of the cell and follow every motion of the count, from whom, out of respect for the confession, they had withdrawn to a sufficient distance to be beyond the sound of his voice.

"A faint sigh wafted through the grating barely reached the count's ear. The countess had hoped that by the closing of the door the count and the priest would be left alone, and that then, moved by her tears and prayers,—seeing a wife praying on her knees for her husband and a child praying for her father,—perhaps this man of God would have consented to turn away his face and let the count escape. It was the last hope of my poor mother, and it failed her."

Emmanuel Philibert started. He sometimes forgot that this was the narration of a son describing the last moments of his father; he seemed to be reading the pages of some terrible legend. Then suddenly a word would bring him to a realization of the fact that this story did not proceed from the pen of some indifferent

historian, but fell from the lips of a son, the true account of his father's death-scene.

"It was the last hope of my poor mother, and it failed her," continued Odoardo, his attention having been withdrawn for a moment from his narration by Emmanuel's movement of sympathy. "For," he continued, "on the other side of the door, in the light of the two torches and the smoking lamps of the corridor, stood the funeral cortége,—a spectacle terrible to look at, and deadly in its purpose. The priest had remained alone with the count, as I have said. The count, caring little in whose name this consoler of his last moments had been sent to him, knelt before him. Then the confession began,—a strange confession, in which he who was about to die seemed to have no thought of himself, but to be concerned only about others; in which the words apparently spoken to the priest were in reality addressed to the wife and child, reaching God only through the medium of a mother's and a daughter's hearts. My sister alone, if she still lives, can tell with what tears that confession was received; for I myself was not there. I, happy boy, ignorant of all that was taking place three hundred leagues away,—I was playing, laughing, singing perhaps at that very moment when my father, on the threshold of death, was speaking of his absent son to my weeping mother and sister."

Overcome with emotion at these recollections, Odoardo stopped a moment; then he continued, sighing: "The quarter of an hour had passed. The duke with watch in hand had observed closely throughout the whole confession the countenances of the priest and the count; then, at the end of the fifteen minutes he said, 'Count, the time which has been allowed you for remaining among the living has expired. The priest has finished

his task ; the executioner must now perform his.' The count received absolution ; and the priest, holding up the crucifix, withdrew through the door, while at the same time the executioner came forward. The count had remained on his knees. 'Have you any last request to address to the Duke Sforza or the Emperor Charles V.?' asked the man with the mask. 'I make no petition except to my Maker,' replied the count. 'Are you ready, then?' asked the same man. 'You see that I am on my knees.'

"The count was indeed kneeling, with his face turned toward the grating of that iron door through which the eyes of his wife and child were looking their farewell. His lips, still moving as if in prayer, sent them loving words, — his last prayer indeed. 'If you do not wish my hand to sully you, Count,' said a voice just behind him, 'be good enough to turn down the collar of your shirt. You are a gentleman, and I have no right to touch you except with the edge of my sword.'

"The count, without answering, turned down his shirt even as far as his shoulders, leaving his neck uncovered. 'Recommend yourself to God,' said the executioner. 'Almighty and most merciful Father, into thy hands I commit my soul !'

"Scarcely had the last words been uttered when the executioner's sword gleamed and whistled through the air like a flash of lightning ; and the head of the count, severed from the shoulders, as if by a last impulse of love rolled slowly forward to the very bottom of the grated door.

"A dull cry was heard, and a noise like the sound of a body falling on the floor ; my mother's stifled cry was thought to be the death-rattle of the murdered man ; and the noise of the falling body was supposed to be made by

the count's corpse as it fell upon the stone floor of the cell.

"Pardon, Monseigneur," said Odoardo, stopping short ; "but if you wish to know the rest, I must have a glass of water, for I feel faint."

Emmanuel Philibert, seeing the narrator of this history tremble and turn pale, sprang to support him, made him sit down upon a pile of cushions, and himself offered him the glass of water for which he had asked. Perspiration stood upon the prince's forehead, and, soldier accustomed to the field of battle as he was, he was almost as near fainting as the unhappy man he was assisting.

In about five minutes Odoardo was himself again. "Do you wish to know more, Monseigneur ?" he asked.

"I wish to know all, Monsieur," said Emmanuel ; "narrations such as these are valuable lessons for princes who are one day to be rulers."

"Yes," said the young man ; "besides, the most terrible part of it is over." With the hollow of his hand he wiped his reeking brow, and at the same time perhaps the tears from his eyes. Then he continued :—

"When my mother recovered her consciousness, the whole scene had vanished like a vision, and she would have thought it a fearful dream had she not awaked on the bed in the jailer's room. So solemn had been her injunctions to my little sister not to weep, lest her sobs should attract attention, that although the poor child thought she had lost both father and mother at once, she watched by her mother's side with her great frightened eyes flooded with tears ; but these tears continued to flow as silently for the mother as they had for the father. The jailer was gone, but his wife had taken his place ; she took pity on the countess, dressed her in some of her own clothes, and put on my sister a suit of her little

boy's. At daybreak she accompanied them as far as the road to Novara ; then giving the countess two ducats, she intrusted her to the care of God.

" My mother seemed pursued by a terrible vision. It did not occur to her to return to the palace for money, or to seek information about the carriage which had been provided for the count's escape ; she was mad with terror. Her only thought was to fly, to reach the frontier, to get away from the territory of Duke Sforza. She disappeared with her child in the direction of Novara, and has never been heard of. What has become of my mother ? Where is my sister ? I have no idea. The news of my father's death reached me at Paris. It was the king himself who informed me of it, at the same time assuring me of his constant protection, and announcing his intention of declaring war to avenge the murder of the count.

" I asked the king's permission to accompany him. At first fortune favored the arms of France ; we crossed the dominions of the duke your father, of which the king took possession ; then we arrived at Milan.

" Duke Sforza had taken refuge at Rome with Pope Paul III.

" Inquiries concerning my father's murder were set on foot ; but it was impossible to find any of those persons who had been present at the time of the murder or had participated in it. The executioner had suddenly died, three days after the execution. No one knew the name of the clerk who read the sentence, and the priest who had received the confession of the condemned was also unknown. The jailer with his wife and son had taken flight.

" Thus in spite of all my endeavors I could not even discover the resting-place of my father's body. Twenty

years had been spent in this useless search when I received a letter dated at Avignon.

"A man who signed his letter only by initial entreated me to come immediately to Avignon if I wished for correct and full information concerning the death of my father Comte Francesco Maraviglia. He gave me the name and address of a priest whom he recommended to me as an escort if I should accede to his request.

"This letter offered me the desire of my whole life, and I set out immediately. I went directly to the house of the priest, who was expecting me, and who accompanied me to the house of the man who had written to me. He was the jailer of the fortress of Milan. On seeing the death of my father and knowing exactly where the carriage with the hundred thousand ducats would be in waiting, an evil spirit tempted him. He had laid my mother on the bed in charge of his wife, slipped down the rope ladder and gone to find the coachman, who was sitting on the box ; he had stolen up close to him, saying that he came in the name of my father, had stabbed him, and after throwing him in a ditch, had driven away with the carriage and the ducats.

"Once over the frontier, he had travelled by post to Avignon, had sold the carriage ; and as no one had ever laid claim to its contents, he appropriated the hundred thousand ducats, and had written to his wife and son to join him.

"But the hand of God was upon this man. His wife died first ; then, after a sickness of ten years, the son followed the mother ; at last he felt that his turn would soon come to render to God an account of his deeds during his life on this earth. It was this call from on high that had caused him to repent and think of me. You understand, then, why he wished to see me.

"He wished to tell me everything, to ask my pardon, not for my father's death, for he was in no way responsible for that, but for the murder of the coachman, and the robbery of the hundred thousand ducats. As for the murdered man, there was no remedy for the crime; the man was dead. But as far as the hundred thousand ducats were concerned the case was different; he had bought with those at Ville-neuve-lez-Avignon a château with a magnificent estate, on the income of which he lived.

"I began by making him relate to me every detail concerning my father's death, not once only, but ten times. To be sure, that night had made so terrible an impression on his mind that no incident had escaped him, and he remembered every detail of that fatal event as if it had happened on the last night. Unfortunately, he could give me no information regarding the fate of my mother and sister, except that his wife had left them on the road to Novara. They must have died of fatigue or hunger!

"I was already rich, and had no need of this increase of fortune, but the day might come when I should find my mother or my sister. Not wishing to dishonor this man by a public avowal of his crime, I made a deed of gift of the château and estate to the Countess Maraviglia and her daughter; then, so far as I was able, and to the extent of the grace given me from on high, I pardoned him.

"But there my forgiveness ended. Francesco Maria Sforza had died in 1535, exactly a year and a day after my father had summoned him to appear before the tribunal of God. I therefore had nothing further to do with him; he had been already punished for his weakness, if not his crime. But there remained the Emperor

Charles V., — an emperor at the pinnacle of his power, on the summit of his glory, at the height of his prosperity ! He was still unpunished, and upon him I was determined to avenge myself.

“ You will say that men who wield a sceptre or wear a crown are responsible only to God ; but sometimes God seems to forget. In that case it behooves man to remember. I remembered ; that is all. But I did not know that the emperor wore under his dress a coat-of-mail. He also remembered ! You desired to know who I am, and why I attempted to commit this crime. I am Odoardo Maraviglia ; and I would have killed the emperor because he caused my father to be assassinated in the night, and was responsible for the death, by hunger and fatigue, of my mother and sister.

“ I have spoken ; and now, Monsieur, you know the truth. I attempted assassination, and I deserve to lose my own life ; but I am a gentleman, and I claim a gentleman’s death.”

Emmanuel Philibert bowed his head in assent.

“ Your demand is a just one, and shall be granted. Do you wish to remain at liberty until the hour of your execution ? I mean, do you wish not to be bound ?”

“ On what condition will that be granted me ?”

“ On your pledged word that you will not attempt to escape.”

“ You already have it.”

“ Repeat it, then.”

“ I repeat it ; but be quick ! The crime has been made public, and the confession is complete. Why should I wait ?”

“ I am not the one to fix the hour of a man’s execution ; that depends entirely upon the pleasure of the Emperor Charles V.” Then, calling the sergeant, “ Take

this gentleman to a private tent," he said, "and let him be well served. A single sentinel will be sufficient to guard him ; I have his word as a gentleman. Go!"

The sergeant withdrew, followed by the prisoner.

Emmanuel Philibert watched him until he had left the tent ; then, fancying he heard a slight noise behind him, he turned around. Leona was standing at the entrance to the opposite compartment, whose canvas hangings had dropped behind her. It was the noise caused by the falling of this canvas that had attracted Emmanuel Philibert's attention. Leona stood with clasped hands, her eyes still wet with the tears she had doubtless shed over the sad story she had just heard.

"What do you want?" asked the prince.

"I want to tell you, Emmanuel," replied Leona, "that this young man must not die."

Emmanuel Philibert's face clouded. "Leona," he said, "this young man has committed a horrible crime, — in intention, at least, if not in fact."

"No matter," said Leona, throwing her arms around the prince's neck ; "still I say that this young man must not die."

"The emperor must decide his fate, Leona. What I must do, and the only thing possible for me to do, is to report everything to the emperor."

"And I tell you, my Emmanuel, that if the emperor condemns this young man to death, you will obtain his pardon, will you not?"

"Leona, you give me credit for more influence with the emperor than I really possess. The imperial justice must take its course ; if it condemns — "

"Whether it condemn or not, Odoardo Maraviglia must live, do you understand? He must live, my dear Emmanuel!"

"And why, Leona, are you so anxious that he should live?"

"Because," replied Leona, — "because he is my brother!"

Emmanuel uttered a cry of astonishment. The woman dying of fatigue and hunger on the banks of the Sesia, the child obstinately preserving the secret of its birth and sex, the page refusing Charles V.'s diamond, — everything was explained by those few words which had just fallen from Leona's lips concerning Odoardo Maraviglia : "He is my brother."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEMON OF THE SOUTH.

WHILE the scene just related was being enacted in Emmanuel Philibert's tent, the huzzas of the soldiers and the flourish of trumpets announced an event which was putting the whole camp in commotion.

A small body of horsemen had been descried approaching from the direction of Brussels, and the skirmishers who had been sent out to meet them had returned at full gallop, making signals of joy and announcing that the leader of the cavalcade was none other than the most august emperor's only son, Philip, Prince of Spain, King of Naples, and husband of the Queen of England.

At the noise of the trumpets and the cheers of those who first recognized the prince, every one hurried from the tents to witness the arrival of the royal guest.

Philip rode a beautiful white horse, which he managed very gracefully. He wore a violet-colored cloak and a black doublet,—which two colors in conjunction are the insignia of royal mourning,—and breeches of the same violet color as the cloak; his high boots were of buff leather, and the little black cap upon his head—such as was worn at that period—was faced on the edge with a fold of black silk and ornamented with a black plume. On his neck he wore the collar of the Golden Fleece.

Philip was at that time a man of twenty-eight years of age, of middle height, rather inclined to stoutness, with

somewhat full cheeks set off by blond whiskers, and a mouth expressing firmness and rarely touched by a smile. His nose was straight, and his eyes were tremulous under their lids, like those of the hare. Although he was handsome rather than ugly, the expression of his face was not sympathetic, and it was easy to imagine that under this prematurely furrowed brow he cherished melancholy rather than pleasant thoughts.

The emperor had a tender affection for Philip. He loved the son as he had loved the mother of that son ; but just when a caress seemed on the point of drawing nearer together their two hearts, he had always felt that the prince's heart was encased in a coating of ice which had never melted in any embrace.

Sometimes, when he had not seen his son for a long time, and was therefore unable to search in the dull and blinking look of the young prince for the intention hidden there, he was uneasy in mind, not knowing in what direction the mining of his ambition might lead this worker in the dark, so continually occupied with secret intrigues. Would it be against their common enemy ? Would it be against himself ? And then, in the doubt of his heart, he would let fall some of those terrible words such as those to which he had that very morning given utterance in his interview with Emmanuel Philibert.

The gloom which attended the young prince's birth foreshadowed his life. There are dreary dawns which cast their reflection over the whole day. The emperor had received the news of his birth — which took place on Tuesday the 31st of May, 1527 — at the same time that he had received news concerning the death of the Constable of Bourbon, the sacking of Rome, and the imprisonment of Pope Clement VII. All rejoicing,

therefore, had been forbidden on the occasion of this birth, lest it should form too great a contrast with the grief of Christendom.

A year later, however, the royal offspring had been recognized Prince of Spain. Then there were splendid fêtes ; but the child who when he became a man would cause so many tears to flow, during all these fêtes had done nothing but weep.

Philip had just reached his sixteenth year when the emperor, wishing to see how he would succeed in war, charged him with forcing the French, under the dauphin, to raise the siege of Perpignan ; but in order to run no risk of defeat in this enterprise, the young prince was accompanied by six Spanish noblemen, fourteen barons, eight hundred gentlemen, two thousand cavalry, and five thousand infantry. Against such a reinforcement of fresh troops resistance was useless. The French raised the siege, and the Infante of Spain began his military career with a victory.

But from the account of this campaign which was brought to him, the Emperor Charles V. had easily recognized the fact that the instincts of his son were not warlike ; he had therefore reserved for himself the hazards of war and the varying fortunes of battle, leaving to the heir of his dominions the study of politics, for which he seemed more especially fitted. At sixteen the young prince had made such progress in this great science of government, that Charles V. did not hesitate to appoint him governor of all the kingdoms of Spain.

In 1543 Philip had married Doña Maria of Portugal, his first cousin, born in the same year, on the same day, and at the same hour as himself. He had a son, Don Carlos, the hero of a lamentable history and of two or three tragedies. This son was born in 1545.

Finally, in 1548, Philip had left Barcelona for a visit to Italy, in the midst of a terrible tempest, which had scattered the fleet of Doria, and forced him to return temporarily into port; then attempting in the face of adverse winds to resume his voyage, he had landed at Genoa, from which place he had gone to Milan. He had explored the battle-field of Pavia, had been shown the place where François I. had surrendered his sword, and had measured with his eye the ditch where the French monarchy had almost found a grave; then, still silent and taciturn, he had left Milan, crossed Central Italy, and rejoined the emperor at Worms. At that time Charles V., Flemish by birth and Flemish at heart, had presented him to his countrymen at Namur and Brussels. At Namur Emmanuel had received him with public ceremonies of honor. The two cousins had embraced each other tenderly at meeting; then Emmanuel had provided for the entertainment of the prince a sham fight, in which of course Philip had taken no part.

The fêtes were not less sumptuous at Brussels than at Namur. Seven hundred princes, barons, and gentlemen received outside the gates the heir of the greatest monarchy in the world. Then, when this heir had been thus publicly recognized and acknowledged, his father sent him back into Spain. Emmanuel Philibert accompanied him as far as Genoa; and during this journey the Prince of Piedmont saw his father for the last time.

Three years after Philip's return to Spain, King Edward VI. of England had died, leaving the crown to his sister Mary, daughter of Catherine, that aunt of the emperor whom he loved so well that he had learned English, he said, only that he might be able to talk with her.

The new queen was eager to secure a husband; she
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was forty-six years of age, and consequently there was no time to lose. Charles V. proposed his son Philip.

Philip's wife, the charming Doña Maria of Portugal, had lived but a short time. Four days after the birth of Don Carlos the queen's women, desirous of seeing a magnificent *auto-da-fé* of Huguenots, had left the young mother alone, with a table covered with fruit standing near her. She had been forbidden to eat of this fruit during her sickness. Daughter of Eve in every respect, the poor princess disobeyed the command ; she arose, and applied her young and beautiful teeth to an apple, and also to a melon ; twenty-four hours afterward she was dead !

There was nothing therefore to prevent the Infante Don Philip from marrying Mary Tudor, thus uniting England and Spain, and between the island of the North and the peninsula of the South strangling France. This was the main object of this union.

Philip had two competitors for the hand of his cousin : Cardinal Pole, a cardinal without being priest, — a son of George, Duke of Clarence, Edward IV.'s brother, — cousin, therefore, of the queen in about the same degree with Philip ; and the Prince of Courtenay, nephew of Henry VIII., and consequently as nearly related as both the others to Queen Mary.

Charles V. began by securing the support of Queen Mary herself ; and with this support, which he had obtained through the influence of Father Henry, the royal widow's confessor, he did not hesitate to proceed.

The Princess Mary was an ardent Catholic, as is shown by the title of "Bloody Mary," which all the English historians have given her. The emperor began therefore by alienating her from the Prince of Courtenay, a young man thirty-two years of age, handsome as an angel, brave

as a Courtenay, by accusing him of being an ardent supporter of heresy ; and indeed Queen Mary noticed that those among her ministers who advised this marriage were those whom she regarded as attached to that false religion of which her father Henry VIII., in order to have nothing to do henceforth with the "Bishops of Rome," as he called them, had declared himself the pope. This point well fixed in the queen's mind, there was nothing more to fear from the Prince de Courtenay.

There remained Cardinal Pole, less brave perhaps than Courtenay, but fully as handsome, and certainly much more diplomatic, brought up as he had been in the school of the popes.

He was the more to be feared because, before her coronation, Mary Tudor, with or without intention, had written to Julius III. to send Cardinal Pole to her in the capacity of apostolic legate, that the latter might co-operate with her in the holy work of the restoration of the old religion. Fortunately for Charles V., the pope, who knew very well what Pole had suffered under Henry VIII. and what dangers he had incurred, was unwilling that so important a prelate should be the first one to plunge into the midst of the fermentations which were rife in England. He therefore sent in advance Jean-François Commendon, gentleman of his bedchamber. But it was Pole and not Commendon that Mary wanted ; she sent back the latter, begging him to hasten the arrival of the cardinal.

Pole set out ; but the emperor had his spies at Rome. He was therefore informed of Pole's departure ; and as the legate *a latere* would cross through Germany and pass by Innspruck, Charles V. gave orders to Mendoza, who commanded a cavalry corps in that city, to stop Cardinal Pole on the way, on the pretext that he was too

nearly related to the queen to give her disinterested counsel in the matter of her marriage with the Infante Don Philip.

Mendoza was a good officer, of the kind needed by princes in such circumstances. He considered nothing but his instructions, which now were to arrest Cardinal Pole; he arrested him and kept him prisoner until the articles of the marriage contract between Philip of Spain and Mary of England were signed. Then Pole was released. He resigned himself to this treatment, like a man of sense, and filled his office of legate *a latere* to the entire satisfaction not only of Mary but also of Philip.

One of the articles of the marriage contract declared that Mary Tudor could marry only a king. This gave no trouble to Charles V.; he made his son Philip king of Naples.

This bit of success somewhat relieved the emperor's depression occasioned by the two defeats he had experienced,—one at Innspruck, where, surprised in the night by Duke Maurice, he had fled so precipitately that he had not perceived that he had put on his belt without attaching to it his sword; the other at Metz, the siege of which he had been forced to raise, leaving his cannon, his wagons, his military stores, and a third of his army.

"Oh," he exclaimed, "fortune favors me, then, once more."

Finally, on the 24th of July, 1554,—that is to say, nine months before the period of our story,—on the same day as the fête of Saint Jacques, patron saint of Spain, Mary of England had been united to Philip II. She who was called the Tigress of the North had married him who was called the Demon of the South.

Philip had set out from Spain accompanied by twenty-

two vessels of war carrying six thousand men. But before entering the port of Hampton he had sent back all these vessels, so that he might arrive in England with only those which Queen Mary, his betrothed, had sent to meet him. There were eighteen vessels in this fleet, led by the largest one ever built by the English, which had been launched for this occasion.

These vessels proceeded to the distance of three leagues upon the high seas to meet the Prince of Spain ; and there, amid the firing of guns, the beating of drums, and trumpet-blasts, Philip passed from his own vessel to that which Queen Mary had sent to meet him.

He was accompanied by sixty gentlemen, of whom twelve were Spanish noblemen, including the Admiral of Castile, the Duke of Medina-Cöeli, Ruy Gomez de Silva, and the Duke of Alva, who had each forty pages and valets. "Indeed, it was reckoned, — and such a wonderful thing was never seen before," says Gregory Leti, biographer of Charles V., — "that these sixty gentlemen had with them twelve hundred and thirty pages and footmen."

The marriage ceremony took place at Winchester. Those who would like to know in what way Mary Tudor came to meet her betrothed, what dress she wore, with what jewels she was decked, of what form was the amphitheatre surmounted by two thrones which awaited the bride and bridegroom ; those who would like to penetrate even farther and know in what manner Mass was celebrated, in what order the guests were placed at table, how their Majesties "rose from table so *adroitley* that although in the company of so many lords and ladies, they disappeared through a secret door and retired to their chamber," — will find these details and many others in the biography from which we have just quoted.

As for ourselves, interesting and pleasing as we should find these details, they would carry us too far, and we will return to the King of Naples and England, Philip II., who nine months after his marriage reappeared upon the continent, and when least expected, was approaching the boundaries of the camp, saluted by the beating of drums, the flourish of trumpets, and the cheers of the German and Spanish soldiers who formed his cortége.

Charles V. had been one of the first to be informed of the unexpected arrival of his son; and pleased that Philip had no motive for concealing from him his presence in Flanders,—apparently, at least, since he had come to see him in camp,—he made an effort, and leaning upon the arm of one of his officers, dragged himself to the door of his tent. He had scarcely reached it when he saw Don Philip approaching amid cheers, braying of trumpets, and beating of drums, as if he were already lord and master.

“Well, well!” murmured Charles V. “God’s will be done!”

But as soon as he saw his father Philip stopped his horse and sprang to the ground; then drawing near, with arms extended, bowing his uncovered head, he knelt at the feet of the emperor.

This mark of humility removed every suspicion from Charles V.’s mind. He raised Philip from his knees, embraced him, and turning to those who had accompanied Philip: “Thanks, gentlemen,” he said, “for divining my pleasure at my dear son’s arrival, and for announcing it in advance by your shouts and huzzas!” Then to his son, “Don Philip,” he said, “it is nearly five years since we saw each other last. Come, we must have much to say to each other!”

And bowing to the crowd of officers and soldiers as-

sembled before his tent, he leaned upon his son's arm and re-entered the pavilion, followed by shouts three times repeated of "Long live the King of England!" and "Long live the Emperor of Germany!" of "Long live Don Philip!" and "Long live Charles V.!"

In fact, as the emperor had said, Philip and he had much to say to each other. And yet, after Charles V. was seated on the divan, and Philip, declining the honor of sitting by his father's side, had taken a chair, there was a moment's silence. It was Charles V. who broke the silence, preserved by Philip perhaps out of respect for his father.

"My son," said the emperor, "nothing less than your dear presence could have dispelled the bad impression which the news received to-day has produced upon my mind."

"A part of this news, and the saddest of all, is already known to me, as is shown by my dress, my father," replied Philip. "We have had the misfortune to lose — you a mother and I a grandmother."

"You learned this in Belgium, my son?"

Philip bowed. "In England, Sire. We have direct communication with Spain; while the courier who brought the news to your Majesty must have been obliged to come here by way of Genoa, which would have delayed him."

"That is true," said Charles V.; "it would be so. But besides this I have another source of anxiety."

"Your Majesty doubtless has reference to the election of Pope Paul IV., and the treaty he has proposed to the King of France, and which must be signed by this time."

Charles V. looked at Philip in astonishment. "My son," he said, "has an English vessel brought you this

information also ? It is quite a distance from Civita Vecchia to Portsmouth ! ”

“ No, Sire, the news reached me through France ; therefore I learned it before you. The passes of the Alps and the Tyrol are still blocked up with snow ; for which reason your messenger was delayed, while the tidings came to me straight from Ostia to Marseilles, from Marseilles to Boulogne, and from Boulogne to London.”

Charles V. frowned. He had long considered it his right to be informed before any one else of any important event which had taken place in the world ; and here his son had not only been the first to hear of Queen Joanna’s death and the election of Paul IV., but had actually informed him of something of which he had known nothing,—that is to say, the alliance between Henri II. and the new pope.

But Philip did not appear to notice his father’s astonishment. “ Then,” he continued, “ all the propositions had been so well considered by the Caraffas and their friends that it was possible to send the treaty to the King of France before the conclave had terminated. This fact explains the boldness with which, after taking Marienbourg, Henri II. has marched upon Bouvines and Dinant, with the intention, doubtless, of cutting off your retreat.”

“ Oh, oh ! ” said Charles V., “ has he then advanced so far, and am I threatened with another surprise like that of Innspruck ? ”

“ No,” said Philip, “ for I hope your Majesty will not refuse to conclude a truce with King Henri II.”

“ By my soul ! ” cried the emperor, “ I should be mad to refuse it, and even not to propose it.”

“ Sire,” said Philip, “ it would make France too super-

cilious to receive such a proposition from you. Therefore we have had the idea — Queen Mary and I — of taking the business upon ourselves in the interest of your dignity."

"And you have come to obtain my permission to act? Well, act; lose no time. Send into France your most skilful ambassadors; they cannot arrive there a moment too soon."

"We thought so too, Sire; and we have sent Cardinal Pole to King Henri to demand a truce, reserving of course to your Majesty the right of refusal."

Charles V. shook his head. "He will not arrive in time," said he; "and Henri will be at Brussels before Cardinal Pole will have landed at Calais."

"But Cardinal Pole came by way of Ostende, and has joined the King of France at Dinant."

"Skilful as he is," said Charles V., with a sigh, "I doubt if he will succeed in such a negotiation."

"Then it gives me the greatest pleasure to announce to your Majesty that he has been already successful," said Philip. "The King of France agrees to, if not a truce, at least armistice, during which the conditions of the truce may be settled. The monastery of Vocelles, near Cambrai, has been selected by him as the place for the conferences; and Cardinal Pole, when he came to Brussels to announce to me the result of his mission, told me that he thought we ought to make no difficulty on this point."

Charles V. felt for Don Philip something like admiration; the latter had come in this unostentatious manner to announce to him the happy conclusion of a negotiation which he, Charles V., had regarded as impossible. "And what is to be the duration of this truce?" he asked.

"The actual or the stipulated duration?"

"The stipulated duration."

"Five years, Sire."

"And the actual?"

"As long as it shall please God."

"And how long, Don Philip, do you think it will please God that it shall last?"

"Why," said the King of England and of Naples, with a hardly perceptible smile, "just long enough for your Majesty to levy in Spain a reinforcement of ten thousand Spaniards, and for me to send from England ten thousand English soldiers to your assistance."

"My son," said Charles V., "this truce was my dearest wish, and — and as you have obtained it for me, well, I promise you that you shall either keep it or break it at your pleasure."

"I do not understand what your august Majesty means," said Philip, whose self-control could not quite prevent his eyes from darting a flash of hope and covetousness. He saw almost within reach of his hand the sceptre of Spain and the Netherlands, and perhaps even the imperial crown.

Eight days later, a truce was concluded in the following terms: —

"There shall be a five years' truce, both on sea and land, equally enjoyed by all the peoples, States, kingdoms, and provinces, of the emperor as well as those of the King of France and of King Philip. During all these five years there shall be suspension of hostilities, but each one of these potentates shall keep all that he has thus far acquired in war. His Holiness Paul IV. is included in this truce."

Philip himself presented the treaty to the emperor, who looked almost with terror upon the impassive face of his son.

The treaty lacked only the signature of Charles V.

Charles V. signed it. Then, when with infinite pain he had traced the seven letters of his name, "Sire," he said, for the first time giving his son this title, "return to London, and hold yourself in readiness to come to Brussels at my first request."

CHAPTER XIV.

CHARLES V. KEEPS THE PROMISE GIVEN TO HIS SON
DON PHILIP.

ON Wednesday, Oct. 25, 1555, the streets of the city of Brussels were thronged not only by the inhabitants of the capital of Southern Brabant, but by those of the other Flemish States belonging to Charles V. All this crowd was hastening toward the royal palace, which is not in existence at the present time, but which then stood on the heights of the city toward the summit of Caudenberg.

A general assembly had been convoked by the emperor, the object of which was as yet unknown ; it had been once postponed, and was to take place on that day. In preparation for this gathering the interior of the great hall had been hung with tapestry on the western end,—that is to say, on the side toward the barriers,—and here a staging had been erected to the height of six or seven feet, which was covered with rich carpets, and upon which were arranged three large empty chairs of state, evidently intended, the one in the middle for the emperor, that on the right for the King Don Philip,—who had arrived the evening before,—and the other, on the left, for the Queen Dowager of Hungary, Mary of Austria, Charles V.'s sister. Above these chairs was suspended a canopy on which were emblazoned the imperial arms. There were also benches arranged in rows on each end of the stage, which formed with the three chairs a

sort of semicircle. Other seats were arranged on the floor, facing the stage as we see them in the theatre.

King Philip, Queen Mary, Queen Eleanor, the widow of François I., Maximilian, King of Bohemia, and Christine, Duchesse de Lorraine, had taken lodgings in the palace. Charles V. alone had continued to occupy what he called his little house in the park.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the emperor left this little house, riding a mule whose easy pace caused him less suffering than any other means of locomotion. As for going on foot, he could not think of it ; his attack of gout had redoubled its violence, and he was not sure that he would be able to walk from the entrance to the stage ; he might have to be carried even that short distance. Kings and princes followed on foot the emperor's mule.

The emperor wore the imperial cloak made all of cloth of gold, over which fell the long cordon of the Golden Fleece. He had his crown upon his head ; but the sceptre, which his hand had no longer the strength to hold, was borne before him on a red velvet cushion.

The personages who were to occupy the benches arranged at the ends of the stage, on each side of the large chairs, had already taken their places. Upon a bench covered with rich tapestry which stood at the right of the chairs of state, were seated the knights of the Golden Fleece. Upon the bench on the left, carpeted in the same manner, were princes, grandes of Spain, and noblemen. Just behind these, upon other benches not covered with tapestry were the three councils, — the council of State, the privy council, and the council of finance. Finally, upon other benches arranged on the floor opposite the stage were placed, first, the deputies from Brabant, then those from Flanders, then those from the other States according to their respective rights of pre-

cedence. The galleries running around the hall had been since morning filled with spectators.

At about four o'clock the emperor entered, leaning upon the shoulder of William of Orange, afterward called William the Silent. Next to William of Orange came Emmanuel Philibert, accompanied by his squire and page. On the other side of the emperor, and a few steps distant from him, walked a man of from thirty to thirty-five years of age, unknown to every one, and who himself seemed to be as much astonished as the spectators at his presence there. It was Odoardo Maraviglia, who had been taken from confinement, magnificently dressed, and conducted to this place without knowing where he was going or for what purpose he was wanted.

At the appearance of this august procession led by the emperor, the crowd of spectators rose to their feet. The Emperor Charles V. ascended the steps of the stage with great difficulty, notwithstanding the assistance rendered him ; and it could easily be seen that it required indomitable nerve and a habit of self-control acquired through years of suffering, to prevent him from uttering a cry of agony at every step. He sat down in the middle chair, with Don Philip on his right and Queen Mary on his left.

Then, at a sign from the emperor, all took their seats,—with the exception, on one side, of the Prince of Orange, Emmanuel Philibert, and the two persons of his suite ; and on the other side, Odoardo Maraviglia, who, free and as we have said magnificently dressed, was observing this spectacle in astonishment.

When everybody was seated, the emperor made a sign to Councillor Philibert Brussellius to address the assembly.

Every one was waiting with intense curiosity, except

Don Philip, whose countenance remained calm and impassive. His veiled eye seemed to see nothing; the blood seemed hardly to circulate under that surface pale and lifeless.

The orator explained in a few words that this assembly of kings, princes, Spanish nobles, knights of the Golden Fleece, deputies from the provinces of Flanders, had been convoked to witness the abdication of the Emperor Charles V. in favor of his son, Don Philip, who now succeeded to the emperor's titles of King of Castile, Leon, Grenada, Navarre, Aragon, Naples, the islands of Sicily and Majorca, the Indies, and the islands of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans; to those of Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, Lothier, Brabant, Luisbourg, Luxembourg, and Quelières to those of Count of Flanders, Artois, and Burgundy; to those of Palatin of Hainaut, Zealand, Holland, Feurette, Hagneau, Namur, and Zutphen; and finally those of Prince of Zwane, Marquis of the Holy Empire, Lord of Friesland, Salmi, Malines, and the cities, towns, and territory of Utrecht, Overyssel, and Groeningen. The imperial crown was reserved for Ferdinand, already King of the Romans.

On hearing this reservation, a livid pallor came over Don Philip's face, and there was a slight twitching of the muscles of his cheeks.

This abdication, at which every breath was suspended in astonishment, was attributed by the orator to the emperor's desire to return to Spain, which country he had not visited for twelve years, and especially to his suffering from the gout, which was very much aggravated by the climate of Flanders and Germany. He concluded by asking them in the emperor's name to take in good part this transfer of their allegiance to the emperor's son, Don Philip; and by way of peroration called upon God

to keep the most august emperor forever under his watchful care and protection. Philibert Brussellius ceased speaking, and resumed his seat.

Then the emperor arose in his turn ; his face was pale, and gave evidence of great suffering ; he intended to speak, and held in his hand a paper containing his written discourse, to which he might refer in case his memory should fail him. At the first manifestation of his intention to speak, the uproar which had spread through the hall at the end of Councillor Brussellius's speech ceased as if by enchantment ; and feeble as was the emperor's voice, from the moment he opened his mouth not one of his words was lost by his audience.

As the emperor advanced in his discourse, and looking back into the past recalled his labors, the dangers he had encountered, his deeds, and his designs, his tones grew louder, his gestures increased, his eye became singularly bright, and his voice took on those solemn intonations in which the last words of the dying are spoken.

“ Dear friends,” he said,¹ “ you have just heard my reasons for deciding to resign my sceptre and crown into the hands of my son. Let me add a few words which will render still more clear to you my resolution and my intention. Dear friends, many of those who listen to me to-day must remember that it was exactly forty years ago on the 5th of January last, that my grandfather, Maximilian of glorious memory, released me from his guardianship, and in this very hall, here, at this very hour, when I was scarcely fifteen years old, made me master of all my rights. The following year, King Ferdi-

¹ We have made no change in the emperor's discourse, which we borrow from a publication issued in 1830, in Brussels, by the honorable and learned assistant curator of the archives of the kingdom, Monsieur L. P. Gachard.

nand the Catholic, my maternal grandfather, having died, I was crowned, being at that time only sixteen years of age.

"My mother was living; but although living and still young, her mind had been so deranged by the death of her husband that she was in no condition to assume the government of the kingdoms of her father and mother; therefore it was necessary for me, at seventeen years of age, to begin my travels by a voyage across the sea, to take possession of the Kingdom of Spain. Finally, when my grandfather the Emperor Maximilian died, thirty-six years ago,—I was then nineteen,—I ventured to ask for the crown he had worn, not because I wished to rule over a greater number of countries, but that I might watch more effectually over the welfare of Germany, my other kingdoms, and especially my beloved Flanders. It is with the same purpose that I have undertaken and accomplished so many journeys; count them, and you will be astonished at their number and extent.

"I have been nine times in upper Germany, six times in Spain, seven times in Italy, ten times in Belgium, and twice in Africa,—making in all forty voyages and expeditions, without including the excursions of less importance, to the islands or subject provinces. In performing these journeys I have crossed eight times the Mediterranean Sea, three times that lying toward the west, which to-day I am preparing to cross for the last time.

"I pass over in silence my journey through France, which I made on my way from Spain to the Netherlands,—a journey to which, as you know, I was forced by serious considerations.

"I have been obliged, on account of numerous and frequent absences, to intrust the government of these

provinces to my good sister, the queen here present. Now, I know, and the several orders of the State know as well as I, how she has discharged her duties.

" Besides making these expeditions I have carried on many wars. All have been undertaken or accepted against my will ; and to-day, now that I am going away from you, dear friends, my greatest sorrow arises from my inability to leave you a more stable peace, a more assured quiet.

" All these things have not been accomplished, as you may well imagine, without hard labor, without grievous fatigue ; and my paleness of face and the feebleness of my body bear witness to the gravity of this fatigue and the severity of those labors. Do not think me so ignorant of myself that in measuring the power granted me by God against the burden laid upon me by circumstances, I failed to perceive my insufficiency for the task. But it seemed to me that, on account of my mother's insanity and my brother's youth, it would have been a crime to set down so soon the burden, heavy as it was, which Providence, in giving me the crown and sceptre, had intrusted to my brains and arms.

" Yet, the last time I left Flanders to go to Germany, I had already intended to carry out the project I accomplish to-day ; but seeing the wretched condition of affairs, feeling that there was yet some strength left me, and compelled by the commotion which was agitating the Christian republic,—attacked at once by the Turks and by the Lutherans,—I believed it to be my duty to put off my period of rest, and to sacrifice to my people what remained to me of strength and life. I was in a fair way to accomplish my purpose, when the German princes and the King of France, violating their pledges, involved me in dissensions and battles. The former attacked me in person, and came near taking me prisoner at Inn-

sprung ; the latter seized upon the city of Metz, which was a possession of the Empire. Then I hastened to besiege it myself with a numerous army. I was vanquished, and my army was destroyed,—but by the elements, not by men. To counterbalance the loss of Metz, I took from the French Thérouanne and Hesdin. I did more : I went to meet the King of France before Valenciennes, and I forced him to retire, doing what I could at the battle of Renty, and deeply regretting my inability to do more.

" But now, besides my incompetency, which I have always acknowledged, I am weighed down by this disease, which is constantly increasing in severity. Fortunately, just when God takes from me my mother, he gives me in return a son who is old enough to govern. Now that my powers are failing, and I am drawing near to death, I have no temptation to place love and the passion for ruling before the well-being and tranquillity of my subjects. Instead of an infirm old man who has already seen the best part of himself decay, I give you a prince who is vigorous, and is to be recommended for his youth and sturdy virtue. Promise to him therefore that affection and that fidelity which you promised to me and which you have so loyally given. Especially take care lest the heresies which surround you on all sides steal into your midst, destroying the brotherly love which should unite you ; and if you see that they are pushing out roots, hasten to extirpate them, pull them from the ground, and cast them away.

" And now as a last word about myself, to what I have already said I will add that I have fallen into many errors, either through ignorance in my youth, through pride in my mature age, or through some other weakness inherent in human nature. At the same time

I here declare that never have I done, knowingly or voluntarily, injury or violence to any one ; and when I have learned that violence or injury has been done, I have always made reparation, — as, before you all, I shall presently do in regard to one of the persons here present, and whom I beg to await the reparation with patience and forbearance."

Then turning to Don Philip, who, as the emperor finished his discourse, threw himself at his feet, " My son," he said, " if by my death you had come into possession of so many kingdoms and provinces, I should doubtless even then have deserved at your hands some consideration for leaving you so magnificent a heritage, whose wealth I have done so much to increase. But since you succeed to this splendid inheritance, not naturally by my death, but by my own will ; since your father has preferred to die to the world before his body descends into the tomb, that you may enjoy while he is still living the advantages of this inheritance, — I ask you, and I have a right to ask you, to repay in the care and love of your subjects what seems due me for having given you in advance the pleasures of sovereignty.

" Other kings have taken pleasure in giving life to their children and bequeathing to them their kingdoms ; but I have wished to take from death the glory of making you this gift, — taking a twofold satisfaction in the fact that I am both the author of your existence and the source of your power. There will be few to imitate my example, as I have found in the past centuries few examples worthy of imitation ; but at least my plan will meet with approval if by your administration you justify this first experiment ; and you will accomplish this, my son, if you preserve that quickness of discernment which you have hitherto exhibited, if you pass your life in the fear

of the Ruler of the universe, if you undertake the defence of the Catholic religion and the protection of justice and the laws, which constitute the great moral force and the best support of empires. Finally, my last prayer in your behalf shall be that you may be so fortunate in your children as to be able to transfer to them, freely and without fear, your empire and your sovereignty, and without being constrained to it as I am."

After saying these words — whether his discourse was really finished or was interrupted by emotion — Charles V. lost his voice ; and laying his hand upon the head of his son kneeling before him, he stood motionless and speechless, the tears flowing freely and silently down over his cheeks.

Then, after a minute of this silence, which was more eloquent than the discourse he had just delivered, as his strength seemed about to give way, he reached out his hand to his sister, while Don Philip, rising from his kneeling posture, put his arm about his waist to support him. Queen Mary drew from her pocket a small crystal bottle containing a red liquor, and turned the contents into a little gold cup, which she presented to him.

While the emperor was drinking, every one in the assembly gave way to emotion. There were among them, whether personal friends of the emperor or mere subjects, few hearts that were not touched, few eyes that were not dimmed with tears.

It was indeed a grand spectacle which was presented to the world by this sovereign, this warrior, this Cæsar, who, after a forty years' reign such as Providence has permitted to few men, voluntarily descended from the throne, and weary in body, weighed down in spirit, proclaimed aloud the vanity of human greatness before the successor to whom he resigned it.

But a still more extraordinary spectacle was to follow, which had been promised by the emperor. It was that of a man publicly acknowledging the commission of a wrong, and asking pardon of him whom he had injured.

The emperor knew that all were awaiting what he had promised, and collecting his forces, he gently pushed his son aside. As soon as it was seen that he was about to speak again, all were silent.

"Dear friends," said the emperor, "I just now promised public reparation to a man whom I have offended. I therefore call you to witness that, after boasting of my good actions, I make confession of my evil deeds."

Then turning toward the unknown in the magnificent dress, whom everybody had already remarked, "Odoardo Maraviglia," he said in a firm voice, "come forward!"

The young man to whom this formal request was addressed turned pale, and trembling all over, drew near to Charles V.

"Count," said the emperor, "whether willingly or unwillingly, I have done you grievous wrong in the person of your father, who suffered a cruel death in the prison of Milan. That deed has often presented itself to my memory veiled in doubt; to-day it appears to me a spectre shrouded in remorse. Count Maraviglia, before all present, in the sight of God and man, at the moment of throwing aside the imperial cloak which for thirty-six years has hung upon my shoulders, I humiliate myself before you, and entreat you not only to pardon me, but to intercede for me with God, who will perhaps grant more to the entreaties of the victim than to the supplications of the murderer."

Odoardo Maraviglia fell on his knees with a cry.

"Most noble Emperor!" he said, "not without reason has the world called you august. Oh, yes, yes, I pardon

you in my own name and that of my father ! Oh, yes, God will pardon you ! But I, august Emperor, of whom can I ask a pardon which I no longer grant myself ? ”

Then rising, “ Gentlemen,” said Maraviglia, turning toward the assembly, “ you see in me a man who intended to assassinate the emperor, and whom the emperor has not only pardoned, but entreated for forgiveness. King Don Philip,” he added, bowing low before him who henceforth would be called Philip II., “ the murderer places himself in your hands.”

“ My son,” said Charles V., whose strength was failing for the second time, “ I recommend this man to you ; let his life be sacred to you ! ” And he fell back almost fainting upon his chair.

“ Ah, my dear Emmanuel,” said the Duke of Savoy’s page, taking advantage of the commotion occasioned by the accident which had happened to the emperor to steal up to his master’s side, “ how good you are ! how great you are ! I see your influence in what has just occurred.” And before Emmanuel Philibert could prevent it, Leone-Leona, his heart swelling with emotion, and his eyes full of tears, had kissed Emmanuel’s hand with almost as much respect as love.

The ceremony, one moment interrupted by the unexpected event we have just related, and which was not the least affecting scene of that solemn day, must resume its course, for it was necessary, in order to consummate the abdication, that after Charles V. had resigned, Philip II. should accept.

Philip, who had made a sign of acquiescence in the recommendation of his father, bowed again very humbly before him, and in Spanish — a language which many of those present did not speak, but which most of them understood — he said, in a tone in which for the first

time, perhaps, there crept a shadow of emotion, “ I have never merited, most invincible Emperor, my honored father, nor could I expect ever to merit, a paternal love so exalted, such as most assuredly never before has existed in this world, or at least never has expressed itself in so noble a manner. This generosity at once overwhelms me with humiliation when I consider my unworthiness, and fills me with gratitude and respect when I think of your greatness. But since you have been pleased to treat me so tenderly and generously in the exercise of your august beneficence, I beg you to extend your kindness, my very dear father, to putting faith in my determination to do all in my power to convince your people of the wisdom of the measures you have taken in my behalf, by exerting myself to govern in such a manner that the States shall be assured of the affection I have always entertained for them.”

After saying these words, he kissed several times his father's hand, while the latter, pressing him to his breast, said : “ My dear son, may God send you his most precious blessings and his divine assistance ! ”

Then Don Philip once more pressed his father's hand to his lips, arose, turned toward the deputies from the States, saluted them, and with hat in hand, — like those who listened to him, with the exception of the emperor, who alone kept his hat on and remained seated, — he spoke in French the following words, which we give exactly, in order not to detract from their peculiar characteristics : —

“ Gentlemen, I regret that I cannot address you in your native language, and assure you of the affection and good-will I bear you ; but as I am not sufficiently familiar with the French language, I will ask the Bishop of Arras to speak for me.”

Immediately Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, who was afterward cardinal, acting as the prince's interpreter, began by praising Don Philip's zeal for the good of his subjects, and declared his determination to conform exactly to the good and wise instructions just given him by the emperor.

Then Queen Mary, the emperor's sister, ruler during the last twenty-six years of the provinces of the Netherlands, arose in her turn, and in a few words resigned into the hands of her nephew the regency with which she had been intrusted by her brother.

After which, King Philip took an oath to maintain the rights and privileges of his subjects ; and all the members of the assembly, princes, Spanish nobles, knights of the Golden Fleece, deputies from the provinces, either in their own name, or in the name of those whom they represented, swore obedience to him.

When this reciprocal oath had been taken, Charles V. arose, yielded his chair to Don Philip, put the crown upon his head, and said in a loud voice : "God grant that this crown be not a crown of thorns for his elect!" Then he took a step in the direction of the door.

In an instant Don Philip, the Prince of Orange, Emmanuel Philibert, and all the princes and noblemen present sprang to the emperor's assistance ; but he made a sign to Maraviglia, who came up in a hesitating manner, for he could not understand what the emperor wanted of him.

The emperor would accept no other aid as he withdrew than that of this same Maraviglia of whose father's death he had been the cause, and who in expiation of this bloody deed had attempted to assassinate him.

But as the other arm of the emperor fell inert by his side, "Sire," said Emmanuel Philibert, "allow my page

Leone also to support your Majesty, and the honor conferred on him I shall consider as bestowed upon myself." And he pushed Leone toward the emperor.

Charles V. looked at the page and recognized him. "Ah, ah," he said, raising his arm so that the page might offer him his shoulder, "it is the young man who refused the diamond. You wish then to be reconciled with me, my pretty page?"

Then looking at his hand, upon the little finger of which only, on account of the pain he suffered, he wore a gold ring, "You have not gained by waiting, my pretty page," he said ; "in the place of a diamond you will have only this simple ring. It bears my initials, to be sure ; which I hope will be to you some compensation." And drawing the ring from his little finger, he put it upon Leone's thumb, all the fingers of that delicate hand being too small to retain the ring.

Then he left the hall, observed by every eye, amid the acclamations of the assembly. Those eyes would have observed more curiously, those acclamations would have been more enthusiastic, if the lookers-on could have known that this emperor descending from the throne, this Christian withdrawing into retirement, this sinner who had humiliated himself to be pardoned, was withdrawing toward his last resting-place supported not only by the son but also by the daughter of that unfortunate Francesco Maraviglia whom he had caused to be murdered twenty years before in a dungeon of the fortress of Milan. It was an illustration of the penitent sustained by prayer,—that is to say, according to the words of Jesus Christ, a spectacle most pleasing in the sight of God.

On arriving at the gate of the solitary street where the mule which had brought him to the palace awaited

him, Charles V. permitted neither of the young persons to go a step farther, and sent Odoardo back to his new sovereign Don Philip, and Leone to his old master Emmanuel Philibert.

Then, without other guard, without other suite, without other cortége than the groom who held the bridle of his gentle mount, he took his way to the little house in the park ; and no one who saw this humble pilgrim riding thus in the darkness guessed that it was he whose abdication was at this hour occupying the attention of Brussels, and would soon attract the attention of the whole world.

Charles V., on arriving at the little house in the park, which occupied then the place where stands now the palace of the chamber of representatives, found the gate unfastened. The groom, therefore, had only to press against it to admit the mule and his rider.

By his master's orders the groom led the mule to the door of the house, in order to shorten the distance which his master would be obliged to walk to reach the salon, and then took Charles V. in his arms and set him down on the threshold.

This door was open also. Charles V. paid no heed to this circumstance, absorbed as he was in reflections which it is easier for our readers to imagine than it would be for us to describe. Leaning on his cane, — which he found in the same place where he had left it two hours before, that is to say, behind the door, — and on the other side supported by the arm of his servant, he reached the salon hung with warm curtains, furnished with thick carpets, and in the chimney of which burned a bright fire.

The salon was lighted only by the light of the flames, which wound themselves greedily around the brands while consuming them ; but this half-light was more in

harmony with the thoughtful mood of the most august emperor than a brighter light would have been.

He lay down on a couch, and sending the groom to his stable, he ran over in his mind all the phases of that life so filled by the events of a half-century,—and what a half-century ! He recalled the times of Henry VIII., Maximilian, Clement VII., François I., Soliman, and Luther ! He constrained his memory to go back over the road by which he had journeyed, retracing the course of its years, like a traveller who at the end of his life re-ascends the river with flowery and fragrant banks which he had descended in his youth.

The journey was grand, imposing, and magnificent. Its course lay through admiring tributes of courtiers, acclamations of multitudes, and homage of peoples gathered to witness that wonderful career.

All at once in the midst of this reverie which was less that of a man than of a god, one of the burning brands broke, one piece falling into the ashes, while the other rolled upon the carpet, causing immediately a thick smoke to rise. This incident, trivial as it was, and perhaps because of its very triviality, recalled Charles V. to reality.

"Here," said he, calling ; "who is in waiting here ? Somebody here ! "

No one answered.

"Is there no one in the antechambers ?" cried the ex-emperor, impatiently, and striking the floor with his cane.

This second call received no more response than the first.

"Come, somebody, and attend to this fire, and make haste !" cried Charles V., more impatiently than before.

Still no answer.

"Oh," he murmured, dragging himself from one piece of furniture to another until he reached the fireplace,— "already alone, deserted ! If Providence wishes to inspire me with repentance for what I have done, the lesson has come quickly !"

And then he himself with his aching hands took up the tongs and with painful efforts mended the fire which there was no one there to arrange for him. All, from the princes to the valets, had gone to salute the new king, Don Philip.

The emperor was thrusting back with his foot from the carpet the last smoking embers, when a step was heard in the antechamber, and the form of a man appeared in the open door, barely visible in the dim light.

"At last !" murmured the emperor.

"Sire," said the new-comer, seeing that Charles V. had mistaken him for somebody else, "your Majesty will excuse me for presenting myself thus ; but finding all the doors open, and seeing no one in the antechamber to announce me, I ventured to announce myself."

"Announce yourself then, Monsieur," replied Charles V., who, as may be seen, readily adapted himself to the rôle of private gentleman. "Well, who are you ?"

"Sire," replied the unknown, most respectfully, and bowing almost to the ground, "I am Gaspard de Châtillon, Sire de Coligny, Admiral of France, and Envoy Extraordinary of his Majesty King Henri II."

"Monsieur Envoy Extraordinary of his Majesty King Henri II." said Charles V., with a bitter smile, "you have mistaken the door. It is no longer with me that you should treat, but with King Philip II., my successor to the throne of Naples nine months since, and to the throne of Spain and the Indies twenty minutes ago."

"Sire," said Coligny, in the same respectful tone, bow-

ing for the second time, “whatever change may have taken place in the fortunes of King Philip II. nine months ago or twenty minutes ago, you are to me still the sovereign elect of Germany, the most mighty, most holy, and most august Emperor Charles V.; and as it is to your Majesty that my king’s letter is addressed, your Majesty will permit me to deliver it to you.”

“In that case, Monsieur l’Amiral,” said Charles V., “help me to light these candles, for it seems that my son Philip’s accession to the throne has deprived me of even my last lackey.” And the emperor, with the assistance of the admiral, set about lighting the candles already placed in candelabra, that he might see to read the letter addressed to him by King Henri II.; and probably, also, he was anxious to see the man who for three years had been so formidable an adversary to him.

Gaspard de Châtillon, Sire de Coligny, was at this time a man from thirty-eight to thirty-nine years of age, with piercing eyes, of martial bearing, tall, and well built. Loyal and bold in character, he had been as great a favorite with François I. as he was with Henri II., and was destined to be with King François II.

For the treacherous assassination of a man such as he,—however extended might be the massacre of August 24, 1572,—was needed a combination of the inherited hatred of Henri Duc de Guise, the hypocrisy of Catherine de’ Medici, and the weakness of Charles IX.

This hatred, which at the time of the illustrious admiral’s first appearance on this stage, was just beginning to separate him from his old friend François de Guise, had taken rise on the battlefield of Renty. In their youth these two great captains, whose combined genius might have had such marvellous results, had been very

intimate ; they enjoyed together all sports, all work, and all exercises. In their studies of antiquity they selected for models not only the men who were noble examples of courage, but also those who illustrated the sentiment of fraternity.

The mutual affection of these two young persons carried them to the extreme of wearing the same ornaments and the same kind of dress. If King Henri II. wished to send a messenger to the Emperor Charles V., and this messenger was other than Constable de Montmorency, it would be either the Admiral de Coligny or the Duc de Guise.

The emperor looked at the admiral with a degree of admiration. It would be impossible to find a man — so all contemporaneous historians declare — who would better represent in his appearance the character of a great captain.

Still, Charles V. instantly understood that Coligny had been sent to Brussels, not exactly to bring him the letter he held in his hand, but rather to report to the court of France what had taken place in the palace at Brussels on this very day, Oct. 25, 1555. And therefore the first question the emperor asked of Coligny, when a few moments' observation of Henri II.'s messenger had satisfied his curiosity, was this : "When did you arrive, Monsieur l'Amiral ?"

"This morning, Sire," replied Coligny.

"And you have brought me — "

"This letter from his Majesty King Henri II." And he presented the letter to the emperor.

The emperor took it, but after several useless efforts found himself unable to break the seal, to such an extent had the gout stiffened his fingers.

Then the admiral offered to assist him. Charles V.

handed him the letter, smiling. "Indeed, Monsieur l'Amiral," he said, "am I not a fine cavalier to joust and break a lance, when I cannot even break a seal?"

The admiral was about to return the opened letter to Charles V., but the emperor said: "No, no; read it, Monsieur l'Amiral,—my sight is as weak as my hand. I think you will admit that I have done well to resign my power and authority into the hands of a man younger and more adroit." The emperor emphasized this last word.

The admiral did not answer, but began to read the letter; while he was thus engaged Charles V., who pretended not to look at him, was in fact observing him with a searching gaze.

The letter contained simply the information that the King of France sent to the emperor the final form of the agreement for a truce,—the preparatory draft having been made five or six months previously. When this letter was read, Coligny drew from his vest the document signed by the plenipotentiaries and stamped with the royal seal of France. The counterpart of this paper, signed by Spanish, German, and English plenipotentiaries, and stamped with the seal of the Empire, had been previously sent by Charles V. to Henri II.

The emperor cast a glance over these political contracts, and as if he divined that a year would not pass before they would be broken, he laid them down upon a large table covered with a black cloth, and with the help of the admiral's arm moved toward his chair. "Monsieur l'Amiral," said he, "is it not a miracle of Providence which permits me to-day, powerless and retired from the world, to lean for support on the arm which in the very height of my sovereignty came near overthrowing me?"

"Oh, Sire," replied the admiral, "there was only one man who could overthrow Charles V., — that was Charles V. himself; and if it was the lot of pygmies like myself to struggle with a giant, it was because God wished to prove beyond question our weakness and your power."

Charles V. smiled. Evidently the compliment did not displease him, coming as it did from a man like the admiral. Resuming his seat, and motioning to Coligny to be seated also, "Enough of this, Admiral!" he said. "I am no longer emperor; I am no longer either king or prince; I am done with flattery. Let us change the conversation. How is my brother Henri?"

"He is wonderfully well, Sire," replied the admiral, accepting the invitation to sit down, which the emperor repeated.

"Ah, how glad I am of that!" said Charles V. "And I have reason to be glad, for I have the great honor to be allied on my mother's side to the king who wears the most celebrated crown in the world. But," he continued, affecting to bring back the conversation to the ordinary events of life, "I have heard that my dear brother is getting gray; and yet it seems but yesterday that he was in Spain, a mere beardless boy. But that was twenty years ago!" And Charles V. sighed, as if these words which had escaped his lips had reopened to his view the vast horizon of the past.

"The fact is, Sire," said Coligny, in answer to the emperor's remark, "that his Majesty King Henri does begin to show gray hairs, but only two or three at most; but many a man younger than he has gray hairs."

"Oh, what you say is very true, my dear Admiral!" exclaimed the emperor. "Allow me, who question you

about my brother Henri's white hairs, to tell you the story of mine. I was about as old as he is now,— scarcely thirty-six or thirty-seven years,— and on my return voyage from Goulette I had arrived at Naples. You know the fastidiousness of that admirable city of Naples, Monsieur l'Amiral,— the beauty and grace of the ladies who live there?"

Coligny bowed, smiling.

"I am a man," continued Charles V.; "I wished to please as well as others. So the day after my arrival I sent for my barber to curl and perfume my hair. This man placed before me a mirror, that I might watch the operation. It was a long time since I had looked at myself. That was a fierce war which I waged against the Turks, the allies of my brother François I. Suddenly I cried out, 'Eh, barber, my friend, what is that?' 'Sire,' replied the barber, 'it is two or three white hairs.' Now I must tell you that the flatterer lied; there were not two or three, as he pretended, but, on the contrary, a dozen. 'Quick, quick, master barber,' I said, 'take out these hairs! Do not leave one of them!' He pulled them out; but what do you think happened? Some time after, looking at myself again in the mirror, I perceived that for every silver thread which had been taken out, ten more had come in its place, so that if I had taken out the latter in their turn, in less than a year I should have been as white as a swan. Therefore, tell my brother Henri, Monsieur l'Amiral, to guard carefully his three white hairs, and not to allow them to be taken out, even by the fair hands of Madame de Valentinois."

"I will not fail, Sire," replied Coligny, laughing.

"And speaking of Madame de Valentinois," continued Charles V., showing by this transition that he was no stranger to the scandal of the court of Henri II., "what

tidings, Monsieur l'Amiral, of your dear uncle, the grand constable?"

"Oh, excellent," replied the admiral, "although his hair is all white."

"Yes," said Charles V., "his hair is white; but he is of the nature of leeks, which also have a white head, while the rest of the body is green. And this is necessary to him, dancing attendance as he does upon the fine ladies of the court. Ah, let me see,—for I do not wish to let you go, my dear Admiral, without asking you about everybody,—how is the daughter of our old friend François I.?" And Charles V. smiled as he laid a peculiar emphasis on these three words, "our old friend."

"Does your Majesty refer to Madame Marguerite of France?"

"Is she still called the fourth Grace, the tenth Muse?"

"Yes, Sire; and every day she grows more worthy this twofold title on account of the patronage she bestows upon our great men of letters, such as Messieurs de l'Hospital, Ronsard, and Dorat."

"Eh!" said Charles V., "it would seem as if our brother Henri II., jealous of his neighbor kings, wished to keep for himself this beautiful pearl; I hear nothing said yet of a marriage for Madame Marguerite, and yet she must be" (Charles V. pretended to be searching his memory) "nearly thirty-two years of age."

"Yes, Sire; but she appears to be scarcely twenty. She grows more beautiful and blooming every day."

"It is the privilege of roses to put forth new leaves and buds every spring-time," replied Charles V. "But apropos of roses and buds, tell me, my dear Admiral, what is the plan of the court of France with regard to our young Queen of Scots? Can I not help you to arrange her

affairs through my influence with my daughter-in-law the Queen of England?"

"Oh, Sire, there is no hurry," replied the admiral; "and your Majesty, who knows so well the age of our princesses, must remember that Queen Mary Stuart is hardly thirteen years old; besides, she is,—I do not think I am revealing a state secret in confiding this fact to your Majesty,—she is intended for the Dauphin François II., and the marriage cannot and will not take place for a year or two."

"Wait, wait, my dear Admiral, let me think," said Charles V.; "it seems to me that I had in mind a piece of good advice to send my brother Henri II.,—some sort of speculation, I think, of cabalistic science—Ah, I have it. But first, can you tell me, my dear Admiral, what has become of a young nobleman called Gabriel de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery?"

"Yes, certainly; he is at court, in great favor with the king, and occupies the position of Captain of the Scotch Guards."

"In great favor, is he?" said Charles V., thoughtfully.

"Have you anything to say against this young nobleman, Sire?" asked the admiral, respectfully.

"No,—but listen to a story."

"I am listening, Sire."

"When I was crossing France, by permission of my brother François I., on my way to suppress the revolt of my dear countrymen and subjects of Ghent, the King of France—as perhaps you know, although you were a mere boy at that time—paid me every honor; for example, he sent to meet me, at Fontainebleau, the dauphin accompanied by a multitude of young nobles and pages. I must say, my dear Admiral, that dire necessity forced me to pass through the kingdom of France, and I should

have preferred to take some other way. I had every reason for distrusting the loyalty of King François I., and I admit that I had some fear (groundless, as events proved) that my brother of France might profit by this opportunity to take his revenge for the treaty of Madrid. I had with me, as if human science could avail against divine resolution, a very clever man, a renowned astrologist, who could judge, by a glance at a man's face, whether he meditated any attempt on the life or liberty of those who trusted him."

The admiral smiled. "It was a wise precaution," he said, "worthy so wise an emperor as you; but your Majesty has seen that sometimes wise precaution is useless precaution."

"Wait; you will see. We were on the road from Orléans to Fontainebleau, when suddenly we saw coming toward us a grand cortége. It was, as I have said, Monsieur le Dauphin of France, accompanied by a multitude of nobles and pages. At first, seeing in the distance only the cloud of dust raised by the horses' feet, we thought that it was a troop of soldiers coming to arrest us; but we soon saw, through the gray cloud of dust, the sheen of satin and velvet and the glitter of gold. This was evidently an escort of honor, and not a hostile troop. Therefore we continued on our way, full of confidence in the pledged word of King François I. Soon the two cavalcades met; and Monsieur le Dauphin, advancing toward me, saluted me in the name of his father. The compliment was so gracious, and went so far—not to tranquillize my fears; God, to whom I am about to consecrate my life, is my witness that I never had a second suspicion of my good brother!—the compliment, I say, was so gracious that I wished to embrace on the spot the young prince who had made it. Now, while I was giving

him an embrace so affectionate that it lasted, I think, a good minute, the two companies had mingled together, and the young noblemen and the pages belonging to the suite of Monsieur le Dauphin, curious, doubtless, to see me on account of the noise I had made in the world, had completely surrounded me, coming as close to me as possible. Then I perceived that my astrologer, Angelo Policastro, an Italian from Milan, had pushed forward his horse in such a manner that he completely flanked my left. It seemed to me audacious in this man to mingle thus with the high nobility. ‘Oh, Signor Angelo,’ I said, ‘what are you doing here?’ ‘Sire,’ he replied, ‘I am in my place.’ ‘No matter! fall back a little, Signor Angelo.’ ‘I cannot and ought not, my august master,’ he answered.

“Then I suspected that there was something wrong with regard to my journey, and fearing that he might obey my first command, ‘Stay where you are, then, Signor Angelo,’ I said, ‘since you have taken this position with some good intention. Only, on our arrival at the château, you will tell me your reason, will you not?’ ‘Oh, Sire, I will not fail to do so, since it is my duty; but turn your head to the left, and observe that young man with the blond complexion and long hair who is riding near me.’

“I looked askance at the young man; it was impossible not to distinguish him, because of his foreign air, unmistakably English, and he was the only one who wore his hair long. ‘Well, I see him,’ I answered. ‘That is enough,—for the present, at least,’ said the astrologer; ‘later, I will speak of him to your Majesty.’

“As soon as we entered the château I withdrew to my apartment under pretext of making my toilet; Signor Angelo followed me. ‘Well,’ I demanded, ‘what have

you to say about this young man ?' 'Did you notice, Sire, the line which, although young, he has between the eyebrows ?' 'No, by my faith !' I said, 'I did not observe him so carefully as that.' 'Well, we astrologers call that line the "line of death." Sire, this young man will kill a king !' 'A king or an emperor ?' I asked. 'I cannot tell you, but it will be a head that wears a crown.' 'Ah, and you have no means of ascertaining whether or not that head is mine ?' 'Yes, Sire ; but in order to do that, I require a lock of his hair.' 'Very good !—a lock of his hair ; but how are you to procure it ?' 'I don't know, but I must have it.'

"I was trying to solve this problem when the gardener's daughter came in, bearing a basket of beautiful flowers, which she set about arranging in vases standing on the mantle, and on little tables about the room. When she had finished I took her hand and drew her toward me ; then taking from my pocket two bright gold pieces, I gave them to her. She thanked me, and I, kissing her brow, said, 'My pretty girl, do you wish to earn ten more ?' She lowered her eyes and blushed. 'Oh, no,' I said, 'not that,—I don't mean that.' 'What do you mean then, Sire Emperor ?' she asked. 'Look !' I said, taking her to the window and showing her the young man with the fair hair tilting in the courtyard ; 'you see that young nobleman ?' 'Yes, I see him.' 'What do you think of him ?' 'I think he is very handsome and very richly dressed.' 'Well, bring me a lock of his hair to-morrow morning, and instead of two gold pieces, you shall have twenty !' 'But how can I get a lock of this young man's hair ?' she asked, looking at me innocently. 'Oh, that is no business of mine, my pretty girl ; you must find a way. All that I can do is to give you a Bible.' 'A Bible ?' 'Yes, so that

you may see what way Delilah invented to cut Samson's locks.'

"The girl blushed again, but seemed satisfied with the instructions, for she went out pensive and smiling at the same time ; and on the next day she came back with a curl of hair as yellow as gold. Ah, the most innocent girl is more than our match in intrigue and tact, Admiral."

"And does your Majesty not finish the story ?"

"Oh, yes. I gave the curl of blond hair to Signor Angelo, who made upon it his cabalistic experiments, and who told me that the horoscope did not threaten me, but a king who bore the fleur-de-lis on his coat-of-arms. Well, my dear Admiral, this young man with the line of death between the eyebrows is the Seigneur de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery, captain of my brother Henri's Scotch Guard."

"What ! Your Majesty suspects — "

"I," said Charles V., rising, to indicate that his audience was finished, — "I suspect nothing, Heaven forbid ! I only repeat to you, word for word, as possibly useful to my brother Henri II., the horoscope of Signor Angelo Policastro ; and I warn his most Christian Majesty to notice particularly this line between the two eyebrows of his captain of the Scotch Guards, which Signor Angelo Policastro called the line of death, remembering that it especially threatened a prince whose coat-of-arms bore the fleur-de-lis."

"Sire," said Coligny, "your message shall be delivered to the King of France."

"And let this serve as a reminder, my dear Admiral," said Charles V., putting about the ambassador's neck the magnificent chain he had worn upon his own, from which hung that star of diamonds called the Star of the West,

in allusion to the western possessions of the kings of Spain.

Coligny would have received the present kneeling ; but Charles V. did not allow him to show this mark of respect, and holding him in his arms, he kissed him upon both cheeks.

At the door the admiral met Emmanuel Philibert, who even before the ceremony was over had come to lay his homage at the feet of this emperor, so much greater in his eyes for having abdicated all greatness.

The two captains saluted each other with courtesy. Each had seen the other on the field of battle, and each estimated the other at his real value, — that is to say, in a high degree.

“ Has your Majesty any further message for the king, my master ? ”

“ No, none,” — he looked at Emmanuel Philibert and smiled, — “ except, my dear Admiral, that if the care for our salvation left us a moment’s leisure, we should turn our attention to finding a husband for Madame Marguerite of France.” And leaning upon Emmanuel’s arm, “ Come, my dear Emmanuel,” he said, moving toward the salon ; “ it seems an age since I have seen you ! ”

CHAPTER XV.

AFTER THE ABDICATION.

FOR those of our readers who like to see the completion of everything and the philosophy of each event, we conclude to write the present chapter, which perhaps impedes somewhat the progress of our action, but which permits the attention, fastened for a time on the Emperor Charles V., to follow this grand career — obscured now in the new mode of life he had adopted — from the day of his abdication to that of his death; that is to say, from Oct. 25, 1555, to Sept. 21, 1558.

When the conqueror of François I. shall be laid in the tomb, to which his rival preceded him nine years ago, we will return to life, combats, fêtes, hatreds, and loves, — in short, to all that vast commotion which reaches even the dead who await in their graves the eternal resurrection.

The various political matters which Charles V. had to attend to in the Netherlands, the abdication of the Empire in favor of Ferdinand, his brother, — an abdication which would follow that of the hereditary States in favor of Don Philip, his son, — detained for another year the ex-emperor at Brussels; so that it was not until September, 1556, that he could leave that city. He then set out for Ghent, escorted by all the ambassadors, nobles, magistrates, captains, and officers of Belgium.

King Don Philip zealously conducted his father to the place of embarkation, that is to say, to Flushing,

whither the ex-emperor was carried on a litter, accompanied by the two queens his sisters, with their women, King Don Philip with his court, and Emmanuel Philibert with his two inseparable companions, Leone and Scianca-Ferro.

The leave-taking was long and sad : this man who had held the world in his grasp was about to part, not only from his two sisters, his son, a grateful and devoted nephew, but also from the world, almost from life, — his intention being to retire into a monastery immediately upon arriving in Spain. He had chosen to bid his friends farewell on the day before his departure, saying that if the parting were delayed until the hour of embarking, he should never have the courage to set foot upon the vessel.

The first one of whom Charles V. took leave — perhaps because in the depths of his heart he loved him the least — was his son, Don Philip. After receiving his father's kiss, the King of Spain knelt before him and asked his blessing. Charles V. gave it with that dignity of manner which he so well knew how to assume on such occasions, and advised him to cultivate peace with the allied powers, particularly, if possible, with France.

Don Philip promised his father to conform to his wishes, although expressing some doubt whether it would be possible in the case of France ; but he declared solemnly that he would faithfully maintain the truce so long as it was not broken by King Henri II., his cousin.

Then Charles V. embraced Emmanuel Philibert, holding him for a long time clasped in his arms, unable to make up his mind to let him go. At last, addressing Don Philip, sorrowfully and with tears in his eyes he said, —

“ My dear son, I have given you many things. I

have given you Naples, Flanders, the two Indies ; I have despoiled myself of everything in fact, to give you all that I possessed ; but remember this : neither Naples with its palace, nor Flanders with its commerce, nor the two Indies with their mines of gold, silver, and precious stones, are equal in value to the treasure I leave you in your cousin Emmanuel Philibert,— a man of force and intellect, a wise politician, and a mighty soldier. I advise you, therefore, to treat him not as a subject but as a brother ; and even then I assure you he will hardly receive his deserts."

Emmanuel Philibert would have embraced his uncle's knees, but the latter still held him in his embrace ; then, gently putting him from his own arms into those of Don Philip, "Go," he said, "go ; it is shameful for men to sigh and weep on account of a short separation in this world ! Let us so live in the merit of good deeds, noble virtues, and a Christian life, that we may hereafter be reunited in the other world ; that is the most important thing." And turning to rejoin his sisters, at the same time motioning to the young men to go away, he refrained from looking toward them again while they remained in the apartment. Don Philip and Emmanuel Philibert mounted their horses, and set out immediately for Brussels.

As for the ex-emperor, he embarked the next day, Sept. 10, 1556, upon a vessel "truly royal in the splendor of its equipment," says Gregorio Leti, biographer of Charles V. ; but scarcely had they reached the open sea, when they were met by an English vessel on which was Count Arundel, who had been sent by Queen Mary to her father-in-law to entreat him not to pass so near the coast of Great Britain without paying her a visit.

In answer to this invitation, Charles V. shrugged his shoulders, and in a tone not quite free from bitterness, he said to the count, "What pleasure can so great a queen derive from a father-in-law who is only a simple gentleman?"

In spite of this answer, Count Arundel insisted with such courteous supplications and so respectful entreaties that Charles V., unable to resist his persistence, said, "Monsieur le Comte, everything will depend upon the winds."

The two queens had embarked with their brother. Sixty vessels escorted the emperor; and the Count Arundel, seeing that although the winds were far from unfavorable, Charles V. had no intention of stopping either at Yarmouth, London, or Portsmouth, insisted no longer: he respectfully joined the escort of the imperial vessel, and accompanied it as far as Loredo, the port of Biscay, where Charles V. was received by the grand constable of Castile.

But just as soon as the ex-emperor had stepped upon this land of Spain, over which he had reigned so gloriously, and even before listening to the speech which the grand constable had prepared to deliver, he threw himself on his knees, and kissing the soil of this kingdom which was to be henceforth his home, he said,—

"I salute thee with the greatest reverence, O common mother; and as I sprang naked from my mother's womb to receive from the world so many gifts, so I wish now to enter naked thy bosom, my dear mother; and if the first was a necessity of nature, this to-day is an effect of grace upon my will."

He had not finished this prayer when the wind began to blow, and a tempest arose of such violence that the whole fleet which had accompanied him perished in the harbor, including the imperial vessel itself, loaded with

treasure and magnificent gifts which the emperor had brought from Belgium to Germany as offerings to the churches of Spain. In reference to this catastrophe it was said by one of the personages in the suite of Charles V. that the vessel, foreseeing that there never again would be such an illustration of glory, had plunged into the sea as a mark at once of respect, regret, and sorrow.

It was well, indeed, that inanimate things should show such marks of respect, regret, and sorrow to Charles V ; for men paid no respect to the emperor dethroned. At Burgos, for example, the ex-emperor crossed the town without being met by a deputation, nor did the citizens even take the trouble to run to their doors to see him pass. Observing this, the emperor said, shaking his head, “Truly, I should think that the inhabitants of Burgos had heard me when I said at Loredo that I was returning to Spain naked.”

That very day a nobleman, Don Bartolomeo Miranda, had come to pay him a visit, and had said to him, “It is exactly a year ago to-day, Sire, that your imperial Majesty began your retirement from the world in order to devote yourself entirely to the service of God.”

“Yes,” Charles had answered, “and it is exactly a year ago to-day since I repented of it.” He had spoken thus in remembrance of that sad and solitary evening of his abdication, when he had no one but Admiral Coligny to help him replace on the fire the brands which had rolled upon the carpet.

From Burgos, the emperor went to Valladolid, which was then the capital of Spain. When within a half-hour’s distance from the city, he saw a cortége advancing toward him ; it consisted of grandees and noblemen, led by his grandson Don Carlos, then about eleven years old.

The boy, managing his horse admirably, rode up on the left side of the emperor's litter. It was the first time he had seen his grandfather, and the latter observed him with an attention which would have embarrassed any other than the young prince. Don Carlos did not even lower his eyes, merely lifting his hat respectfully when the old emperor's glance was fixed upon him, and replacing it upon his head when Charles V. stopped looking at him.

As soon as he had retired to his apartment, the emperor sent for the lad, that he might observe him more closely and talk with him. The boy presented himself respectfully, but without any embarrassment.

"It was kind of you, my grandson," said Charles V., "to come to meet me."

"It was my duty," replied the boy, "since I am doubly your subject; for you are my grandfather and my emperor."

"Ah," said Charles V., surprised to find so much self-possession and firmness in a boy so young.

"Besides, it was not duty toward your imperial Majesty so much as curiosity that led me to go to meet you."

"How is that?"

"Oh, I have heard it often said that you were an illustrious emperor, and that you had done great things."

"Ah, really," said Charles V., who was amused at the boy's naïveté; "would you like to have me tell you about some of these great things?"

"It would be a great honor, and would give me much pleasure," replied the young prince.

"Well, take that seat."

"With your Majesty's permission," said the boy, "I will listen standing."

Then Charles V. told him the story of all his wars against Francois I., against the Turks, and the Protestants.

Don Carlos listened attentively, and when his grandfather had finished he said, showing that the story was not new to him, "Yes, that is it."

"But," said the emperor, "you do not tell me, Monsieur my grandson, what you think of my adventures, and whether I seem to you to have conducted myself bravely."

"Oh," said the young prince, "I am very well satisfied with your conduct ; there is only one thing which I could not excuse — "

"Bah !" said the emperor, in astonishment ; "what is that ?"

"You fled, half naked, one night, at Innspruck, from Duke Maurice."

"Oh, as to that," said the emperor, smiling, "I could not help that, I assure you. He surprised me, and I had only my private retainers."

"But I should not have fled," said Don Carlos.

"What ! you would not have fled ?"

"No."

"But I was obliged to fly, since I could not resist him."

"I should not have fled," repeated the young prince.

"I should have been obliged to give myself up. That would have been a great imprudence, for which I should have been still more to blame."

"No matter ; I should not have fled," repeated the boy.

"Tell me what you would have done under such circumstances ; and to be more specific, what would you actually do, for example, if I should set thirty pages at your heels ?"

"I should not fly," was the boy's answer.

The emperor frowned, and summoning the tutor of the young prince, "Monsieur," he said, "take away my grandson. I congratulate you on his education; if he goes on, he will be the greatest soldier in our family."

The same evening he said to his sister, Queen Eleanor, whom he was to leave at Valladolid: "It seems to me, Sister, that King Don Philip is unfortunate in his son Don Carlos; his manners and his disposition in this period of early youth do not please me; they are not suitable to one of his years. I don't know what the result will be when he shall be twenty-five years of age. Consider attentively his words and actions, and tell me truthfully, when you write to me, your opinion upon this subject."

The day after the morrow, Charles V. set out for Palencia, and on the day following that Queen Eleanor wrote to him: "My brother, if the manners of our little nephew Carlos displeased you, who saw him only one day, I dislike them still more, who have been here three days."

This little fellow who was so persistent in saying that he would not have fled at Innspruck was the same Don Carlos who was killed by the order of his father, Philip II., twelve years later, on the pretext that he had conspired with the revolters of the Netherlands.

At Valladolid the emperor had dismissed his court, retaining twelve domestics and twelve horses, and reserving for himself only a few rare and precious articles of furniture; all the rest he distributed among the gentlemen who had accompanied him. Then he bade farewell to the two queens, and set out for Palencia.

Palencia was situated only eighteen miles from the monastery of St. Just, belonging to the order of Saint

Jerome, which Charles V. had chosen as his retreat, and whither he had sent an architect a year previously to build an apartment of six rooms, four of which were to be like the cells of a monk, and the other two somewhat larger. The artist was, besides, to lay out a little garden, the plan of which the emperor himself had designed.

This garden was the most charming part of the imperial retreat ; it was bounded on two sides by a little stream of clear running water, and was planted with orange-trees, lemon-trees, and cedars, which filled the air with perfume and shaded the windows of the illustrious recluse.

In 1542 Charles V. had visited this monastery of St. Just, and on leaving it had said, "This is indeed a place of refuge for a second Diocletian."

The emperor took possession of his apartment at the monastery of St. Just on Feb. 24, 1557. It was the anniversary of his birth, and that had always been for him a lucky day. "I wish," he said, as he stepped over the threshold of the convent, "to be born again into heaven on the same day of the year on which I was born upon the earth."

Of the twelve horses which he had reserved, he sent away all but one, which he sometimes used for riding in the delightful valley of Serandilla, distant only about a mile, and which is sometimes called the Paradise of Estremadura. From this time he held but little communication with the world, receiving only rare visits from his former courtiers, and once or twice a year letters from King Philip, Emperor Ferdinand, and the two queens his sisters ; his only diversions were the rides already mentioned, the dinners which he sometimes gave to gentlemen who came to visit him and whom he detained until evening, saying, "My friends, stay with me and live a religious life," and

the pleasure of caring for the little birds of every species which he kept confined in aviaries.

This mode of life was continued one year; but at the end of that time it seemed to the august recluse to be still too worldly, and on the anniversary of his birth — which was also, we remember, that of his retirement into the convent, — the Archbishop of Toledo having come to pay him a visit of congratulation, he said to him: “Monsieur, I have lived fifty-seven years for the world, one year for my most intimate friends and subjects, in this secluded place, and now I wish to devote to the Lord the few months of life that remain to me.”

He thanked the prelate for his visit, but begged him not to take the trouble to come to see him, unless the salvation of his soul required that he be sent for. In short, after Feb. 24, 1558, the emperor lived in an austerity which almost equalled that of the monks, — eating at their table, undergoing the same discipline, attending regularly the services of the choir, and allowing himself no other diversion than that of saying masses for the great number of soldiers, sailors, officers, and captains who had died in his service, in the various wars which he had declared or had instigated in the four quarters of the globe.

For the generals, councillors, ministers, and ambassadors, of the anniversaries of whose death he kept an exact record, he had special altars erected and Masses celebrated; so that it might be said of him that after seeking glory in reigning over the living, he now made it his religion to reign over the dead.

At last, toward the beginning of the month of July in that same year 1558, weary of witnessing the funeral ceremonies of others and surfeited with that sombre diversion, Charles V. resolved to celebrate his own

obsequies. Yet, it took some time to accustom himself to this somewhat singular idea. He feared to be accused of pride or eccentricity in yielding to this desire ; but the fancy took such irresistible hold of him that he disclosed it to one of the monks of the monastery called Father Jean Regola.

It was with fear and trembling lest the monk should see some obstacle to the execution of this plan, that Charles V. ventured to confide in him ; but the monk, on the contrary, to the great joy of the emperor, replied that although it would be an extraordinary and unexampled step, he saw no harm in it, and even considered it pious and exemplary.

But this assent of a simple monk did not appear in so serious a case sufficient to the emperor ; Father Regola offered therefore to obtain the opinion of the Archbishop of Toledo.

Charles V. approved this suggestion, and appointing the monk ambassador to the prelate, he sent him off, mounted on a mule and with an escort, to procure the much desired permission.

Never in the days of the temporal power of Charles V. had he awaited the return of a messenger with such impatience.

At last, in about fifteen days, the monk returned. The answer was favorable ; the Archbishop of Toledo regarded the emperor's desire as most holy and most Christian.

Immediately upon the return of the monk the whole attention of the convent was devoted to the preparations for the obsequies, that they might be worthy the great emperor for whom they were to be celebrated.

The construction of a splendid mausoleum in the middle of the church was the first thing undertaken. Father

Vargas, who was an engineer and sculptor, made a design which met the emperor's approval, with the exception of some details which he changed.

The design approved, master carpenters and painters were sent for from Palencia, who for five weeks employed twenty men in the construction of this mausoleum. At the end of five weeks, thanks to the diligence which the emperor's presence and encouragement had imparted to every one, the monument was completed. It was forty feet long, fifty feet high, and thirty feet wide. Galleries ran all around it, the ascent to which was made by several staircases, and in which could be seen a series of carvings representing the most illustrious emperors of the house of Austria, and the principal battles of Charles V. himself; finally, on the very top rested the uncovered coffin between Fame on its left and on its right Immortality.

When all was ready, the morning of the 24th of August was appointed for these mock obsequies.

At five o'clock—that is to say, an hour and a half after sunrise—four hundred large black candles arranged upon the sarcophagus were lighted, around which stood all the domestics of the ex-emperor, dressed in mourning, with uncovered heads, and each bearing in his hand a torch. At seven o'clock Charles V. entered, dressed in a long mourning-robe and supported on each side by a monk also dressed in black. He also bearing in his hand a torch, took a seat placed for him before the altar. There, motionless, his torch resting on the ground, he who was living listened to all those hymns for the dead, from the *Requiem* to the *Requiescat*, while six monks of different orders were saying six low Masses before the six side altars of the church.

Then at a given moment, rising and still escorted by

the two monks, he proceeded toward the high altar and kneeling said : " I supplicate and beseech thee, O Supreme Ruler, and Arbiter of our life and our death, that as the priest receives from my hands into his own this wax taper, which I offer in all humility, even so thou wilt accept my soul, which I recommend to thy divine indulgence, and that thou wilt receive it when it shall please thee into the bosom of thy goodness and thy infinite mercy."

Then the prior put the candle in a massive silver candlestick which the ex-emperor had given to the convent for this great occasion. After which Charles V. arose, and accompanied still by the two monks, who followed him like his shadow, he resumed his seat.

When the Mass was ended, the emperor proceeded to the final ceremony, which he considered the most important of all. He had a flag-stone lifted from the floor of the choir, and in the bottom of a sort of grave, dug for this occasion, he ordered a black velvet cloth to be laid, together with a black velvet pillow. Then assisted by the two monks, he descended into this grave, extended himself, with his hands crossed upon his breast and his eyes closed, counterfeiting death as well as he was able.

Immediately the priest intoned the *De profundis clamavi*, and while the choir was singing it, all the monks dressed in black, all the gentlemen, and all the domestics in mourning dress, taper in hand, weeping, began to march around the deceased, led by the officiating priest, and each in his turn throwing upon him the holy water, and wishing repose to his soul.

The ceremony lasted more than two hours, so many were there to throw the holy water. The emperor was wet even through his black robe ; and this combined with the wind which penetrated through the chinks in

the stone-work, — a cold and damp wind ascending from the mortuary cellars of the abbey, — so chilled the emperor that he was shivering with cold when, left alone in the church with his two monks, he wished to return to his cell. Finding himself benumbed and shaking with cold, he said, “ Fathers, indeed, I do not know that it is worth while to get up.”

When he reached his cell he was obliged to go to bed ; and once in bed he remained there till he died. In less than a month all the preparations for the mock funeral ceremonies served for the real obsequies of the Emperor Charles V.

It was on Sept. 21, 1558, that Charles V. breathed his last in the arms of the Archbishop of Toledo, who fortunately happened to be at Palencia, and whom the emperor summoned for the final scene, according to his promise, six months before, to send for him at the time of his death.

The emperor had lived fifty-seven years seven months and twenty-one days ; he had reigned forty-four years, and had been ruler of the Empire thirty-eight years. And as he had been born on the day of one apostle, Saint Mathias, February 24, he died on the day of another apostle Saint Matthew, — that is to say, on the 21st of September.

Father Strada relates in his “ Histoire des Flandres,” that on the very night of the death of Charles V. a lily bloomed in the garden of the monastery of St. Just. When the monks were informed of this, they had the lily exposed to view upon the high altar, as evident proof of the purity of the emperor’s soul.

What a fine thing is history ! Deeming ourselves unworthy to perform the function of the historian, we have joined the ranks of the writers of romance.

P A R T II.

CHAPTER I.

THE COURT OF FRANCE.

ABOUT a year after Charles V.'s abdication at Brussels, shortly before the ex-emperor retired to the monastery of St. Just, when from the heights of St. Germain could be seen in the distance the yellowing fields of grain, and the last days of July rolled their clouds of flame across the azure sky, a brilliant cavalcade started out from the old château, and proceeded through the park, where the tall and beautiful trees were beginning to assume those warm tints that are dear to the painter.

A brilliant cavalcade, indeed ! For it comprised King Henri II., his sister Marguerite, the beautiful Duchesse de Valentinois his mistress, the dauphin François, his eldest son, his daughter Élisabeth de Valois, the young queen of Scotland, Mary Stuart, and the principal ladies and noblemen who at that period constituted the ornament and glory of the house of Valois, which had come to the throne in the person of François I., deceased, as we have said, May 31, 1547.

Moreover, on the airy balcony of the château, which was supported by a network of iron marvellously wrought, were Queen Catherine and the two young princes, Charles, aged seven, and Henri, aged six years,—afterward King Charles IX. and King Henri III.,—and the little Mar-

guerite, who was to be queen of Navarre, and who at that time was scarcely five years old. These three children were obviously too young to accompany their father, King Henri, on the hunt which was beginning.

As to the queen, she had avoided taking part in the chase by alleging a slight indisposition ; and as Queen Catherine was one of those women who do nothing without a purpose, we may be very sure that if she was not really indisposed she had at least a reason for pretending to be so.

Since all the personages above mentioned are destined to play an active part in the story we have undertaken to relate, the reader will permit us, before resuming our continuous narration, to place before him a portrait, moral and physical, of each of these personages.

We will begin with Henri II., who is at the head of the cavalcade, with Madame Marguerite, his sister, on his right, and on his left the Duchesse de Valentinois. He was at that time a handsome nobleman, thirty-nine years of age, with black eyebrows, black eyes, a dark beard tinted with brown, an aquiline nose, and fine white teeth ; he was neither so tall nor so muscular as his father had been, but was above the middle height and well formed. So fond of war was he that when unable to engage in actual warfare in his own dominions or in those of his neighbors, he instituted sham battles among the pleasures of his court.

Thus, even in times of peace, King Henri II. was the least idle man in his kingdom. Of literary culture and taste he had only enough to incline him to give honorable recompense to the poets, — in regard to whose merits he received his opinions ready-made from his sister Madame Marguerite, from his mistress the beautiful Diana, or from his charming young pupil Mary Stuart.

His days were occupied as follows : his mornings and

his evenings were devoted to business ; in the morning two hours were ordinarily sufficient for what was in hand. Then he devotedly attended Mass ; for he was a strong Catholic, as was shown in his declared wish that he might see Anne Dubourg, the Parliament councillor, burn at the stake,—a pleasure denied him, however, since he had been dead six months when the poor Huguenot was led to martyrdom. At noon he dined ; after dinner, in company with the noblemen of his court, he paid a visit to Queen Catherine, where he met, according to Brantôme, a throng of *human goddesses*, each more beautiful than the rest. While he occupied himself with the queen, or with madame his sister, or with the dauphiness Mary Stuart, or with the princesses his daughters, each nobleman and gentleman followed the example of the king, and conversed with the lady most agreeable to him. This lasted about two hours ; then the king went to his exercises. In the summer these exercises were tennis, football, and pall-mall.

Henri II. was extremely fond of tennis, and was very skilful at that game. When he won, he resigned the stakes to his partners ; when they lost, he paid for them. The stakes were usually five hundred to six hundred crowns, and not, as under his successors, four thousand, six thousand, and even ten thousand crowns. "But," says Brantôme, "in the time of King Henri II. the payments were in cash, and were made on the spot, while in our time one is often obliged to have recourse to special terms of adjustment."

The other favorite games of the king, after tennis, were football and pall-mall ; and in these games also he was a strong player.

In the winter, when it was very cold, the king, with members of his court, set out for Fontainebleau ; and

there, in the avenues of the park or on the ponds, they amused themselves by sliding on the ice. If there was too much snow for that diversion, they made forts and fought with snowballs; if it rained, they resorted to the basement halls and practised fencing.

Of the exercise last-named Monsieur de Boucard had been a victim; the king while yet dauphin, in fencing with him, had put out one of his eyes,—“an accident for which Henri politely asked his pardon,” says the author from whom we borrow these details.

The ladies of the court were present at all these exercises, both of the summer and of the winter; for the king was of the opinion that the presence of ladies marred nothing, and was very ornamental.

In the evening, after supper, another visit was paid to the queen, and when there was no ball,—an entertainment quite rare at that period,—two hours were spent in conversation. It was then that poets and other men of letters were introduced,—that is to say, Messieurs Ronsard, Dorat, and Muret, and Messieurs Danesius and Amyot, preceptors of the princes François and Charles; and then ensued, among these illustrious disputants, discussions of science and poetry, in which the ladies were much interested.

One thing only, when perchance attention was given it, cast a shade of sorrow over that noble court,—the ominous prediction declared on the day of Henri II.’s accession to the throne. A diviner summoned to the palace to compose his nativity had announced, in presence of the Constable de Montmorency, that the king would be killed in single combat. Thereupon the king, delighted that such a death was promised him, had turned to the constable, saying to him, “Do you hear, comrade, what this man promises me?”

The constable, thinking the king was frightened by the prediction, had answered with his usual roughness : "Eh, Sire, do you put any faith in these rascals, these liars and braggarts ? Let me throw the fellow's prediction into the fire, and him with it, — to teach him better than to bring us lies like these."

"By no means, comrade," the king had replied. "It sometimes happens that these men speak the truth. And besides, the prediction is not bad, in my opinion. I would rather die in that way than in any other,— provided, of course, that I am conquered by a brave and valiant gentleman, and there is some glory in it." And instead of giving the prediction and the astrologer to the flames, he had generously rewarded the latter, and had given the prophecy into the keeping of Monsieur de l'Aubespine, one of his worthy councillors, whom he specially employed in diplomatic matters.

This prediction had been brought into prominence again when Monsieur de Châtillon returned from Brussels ; for, as will be remembered, the Emperor Charles V. in his little house in the park had asked the admiral to inform his good cousin Henri that the captain of the Scotch Guards, Gabriel de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery, had between his eyes a certain sinister mark that betokened death to one of the princes of the fleur-de-lis.

But upon reflection King Henri II. had recognized the improbability of a duel with his captain of the Guards, and though he had ranked the former prediction among things possible and deserving attention, he had ranked the later prophecy among things impossible, which deserve no attention ; so that, instead of sending away Gabriel de Lorges, as perhaps a prince more timorous would have done, he had, on the contrary, increased toward him his familiarity and his favor.

We have said that on the right of the king rode Madame Marguerite of France, daughter of King François I. Let us for a moment give our attention to that princess, one of the most accomplished of her time, and peculiarly related to our subject.

The Princess Marguerite of France was born June 5, 1523, in the same palace of St. Germain whose threshold we have already crossed. It follows that at the time when we introduce her to the reader she was thirty-three years and nine months old.

How had a princess so grand and so beautiful remained so long unmarried? There were two reasons for this, one of which she declared aloud before all; the other she perhaps would hardly dare to whisper to herself.

King François I. had wished to marry her, while she was yet a young girl, to Monsieur de Vendôme, first prince of the blood; but she, with disdainful pride, had answered that she would never marry a man who one day would be the subject of the king her brother.

This was the reason which she declared aloud for remaining unmarried,—that she might not fall from her rank as a princess of France; and now for the reason which she might have whispered to herself, and which probably was the real cause of her refusal.

After the conference at Nice between Pope Paul III. and King François I., by the order of the king, the Queen of Navarre went to visit the late Monsieur de Savoie, the father, at the castle of Nice, and had taken with her Madame Marguerite. The old duke had been much pleased with the young princess, and had spoken of a marriage between her and Emmanuel Philibert. The two children had seen each other at that time; but Emmanuel Philibert, absorbed in the exercises of his age, in

his tenderness for Leona, and in his friendship for Scianca-Ferro, had scarcely noticed the young princess. It was not so with her, however ; the image of the young prince had taken firm hold of her heart, and when the negotiations were broken off and war was once more declared between the King of France and the Duke of Savoy, she experienced a real despair, like that of a neglected child, which, for a long time nourished by her tears, became transformed into a gentle melancholy, soothed by that vague hope which never abandons tender and trusting hearts.

Twenty years had rolled by since that time, and the Princess Marguerite had found some pretext for refusing every proposal of marriage.

While waiting until chance or the decree of Providence should favor her secret desires, the Princess Marguerite had grown in height as she grew in years, and had become a charming princess, full of grace, agreeable in manner, and of gentle disposition. She had beautiful golden-colored hair, hazel eyes, a nose somewhat long, full lips, and a skin of milky whiteness tinted with rose-color.

At the king's left hand, as we have said, rode Diane de Poitiers, Comtesse de Brézé, daughter of that Sieur de Saint-Vallier who, an accomplice of the Constable de Bourbon, had been condemned to be beheaded in the Place de Grève, and who even when on the scaffold and under the sword of the executioner had obtained as a favor—if such a thing can be called a favor—the commutation of his punishment to imprisonment for life. His imprisonment was to be in a space enclosed by four stone-walls, with no opening except a little window through which his food and drink were to be handed to him.

This Diane, who was the subject of mysterious and

mythical stories, was at this time fifty-eight years of age, and yet by her apparent youth and real beauty she eclipsed the most beautiful and the youngest princesses of the court, so that the king preferred her beyond all others.

Such marvellous and mysterious things as the following were said of this beautiful Diane, who had been made Duchesse de Valentinois in 1548 by King Henri II. : In the first place, she was said to have been descended from the fairy Melusina, which was the cause of the king's love for her, and accounted for the wonderful preservation of her beauty. Diane de Saint-Vallier had inherited from her ancestress, the great enchantress, the twofold secret — a rare and magic secret — of eternal beauty, and the endless power of inspiring love.

Diane owed this eternal beauty, it was said, to drinks of liquid gold. It is well known how largely this liquid gold entered into the chemical preparations of the Middle Ages. That endless power of inspiring love was ascribed to the efficacy of a magic ring which she had given to the king, and which had the virtue of securing to her the king's love so long as he should wear it.

This last report had gained general credence, for Madame de Nemours told the story to whoever wished to hear it, as we in our turn narrate it.

The king having fallen sick, Queen Catherine de' Medici had said to Madame de Nemours : " My dear Duchess, the king is very fond of you ; be so kind as to go to his room and sit by his bed, and while talking with him try to take from the third finger of his left hand the ring he wears, which is a talisman given him by Madame de Valentinois to secure his love for her."

Now, no one at court had much affection for Madame de Valentinois, — not that she was ill-natured, but the young women did not like her because, as we have said,

she persisted in remaining young, and the older women detested her because she would not grow old.

Madame de Nemours willingly undertook the commission ; and entering the king's room, and sitting down by the bed, she began playfully to draw from Henri's finger the ring, the virtue of which he himself did not know ; but no sooner had the ring left the sick man's finger than he begged Madame de Nemours to whistle for his valet. Now, until the time of Madame de Maintenon, who invented bells, the gold or silver whistle was the means employed by princes and noblemen in calling their servants. The sick man, therefore, entreated Madame de Nemours to whistle for his valet, who, as soon as he appeared, received the king's orders to close his door to every one.

"Even to Madame de Valentinois ?" asked the astonished valet.

"To Madame de Valentinois as well as others," replied the king, sharply ; "there is no exception to the order." -

A quarter of an hour later Madame de Valentinois presented herself at the king's door, and was refused admittance. She returned at the end of an hour, and was again refused ; at last, at the end of two hours, in spite of a third refusal, she forced open the door and walked straight to the king. She took his hand, and perceiving that the ring was gone, obtained an avowal of what had taken place, and forthwith insisted that he should reclaim his ring from Madame de Nemours. The king's command to return the precious trinket was so peremptory that Madame de Nemours, who had not yet delivered it up to Catherine, through fear of the consequences, sent back the ring. The ring once more upon the king's finger, the fairy regained her power, which from that day forth suffered no diminution.

In spite of the grave authorities which give us this history,—and observe that for the drink of liquid gold we have the testimony of Brantôme, and for the affair of the ring the assurance of Monsieur de Thou and Nicolas Pasquier,—we are inclined to believe that no magic existed in this miracle of the beautiful Diane de Poitiers, which a hundred years later was to reappear in Ninon de Lenclos; and we are disposed to accept, as containing the only and real magic, the recipe which she herself gave to any one who asked it,—that is to say, in all sorts of weather, even the coldest, *a cold-water bath*. Besides this, every morning the duchess rose with the dawn, rode for two hours on horseback, and on her return went back to bed, where she remained until noon reading or talking with her women.

Nor was this all; everything relating to the beautiful Diane has been made a subject of speculation, and the most reliable historians have forgotten in her case this first principle of history, that every accusation should be supported by proof.

Mézeray says—and we are not sorry to find Mézeray at fault—that François I. would not have granted favor to Jean de Poitiers, Diane's father, unless he had taken from his daughter “that which was most precious to her.” Now, the incident occurred in 1523; at that time Diane, born in 1499, was twenty-four years of age, and for ten years had been married to Louis de Brézé. We do not say that François I., an old offender in that line, did not impose certain conditions upon the beautiful Diane; but it was not, as Mézeray says, upon a young girl of fourteen years that he imposed these conditions; and without calumniating that poor Monsieur de Brézé, to whom his widow raised the magnificent tomb so much admired at Rouen, one cannot reasonably suppose that

he left it to the king to take from the woman twenty-four years old that which had been most precious to the young girl of fourteen.

All that we have just said has but one aim, — to prove to our readers that the history written by novelists is of more value than that written by historians ; because it is, in the first place, more veracious, and, in the second place, more amusing.

Finally, Diane at this time, having been a widow for twenty-six years, and mistress of Henri II. for twenty-one years, had, in spite of her full fifty-eight years of age, a most smooth and beautiful complexion, beautiful curly black hair, an admirable figure, and a neck and throat without fault.

This at least was the opinion of the old Constable de Montmorency, who, although more than sixty-four years old, pretended to enjoy with the beautiful duchess peculiar privileges ; which would have made the king very jealous were it not a well-established fact that those persons who are most interested to know a thing are the last to discover it, and sometimes do not discover it at all.

Pardon us this long historical digression ; but if any woman at this court, so polite, so cultured and elegant, was worthy of so many words, it was certainly that one among them who induced her royal lover to wear the colors which she herself wore as a widow, — black and white, — and by suggestion of her pagan name “Diane,” inspired him with the idea of adopting for arms a crescent with this device : *Donec totum impleat orbem !*

We have said that behind King Henri II., who had Madame Marguerite of France upon his right, and on his left the Duchesse de Valentinois, rode the dauphin François, with his sister Elisabeth on his right, and his fiancée, Mary Stuart, on his left.

The dauphin was fourteen years old ; Elisabeth, thirteen ; Mary Stuart, thirteen. The sum total of their ages was forty years.

The dauphin was a feeble and sickly child, of a pale complexion, auburn hair, eyes dull and without definite expression save when they gazed upon the young Mary Stuart ; then they became animated by an expression of desire, which changed the child to a young man. Furthermore, he was but little inclined to the violent exercises of which his royal father was so fond, and seemed to be oppressed by a lassitude for which the physicians were unable to account. Following the hints given in the pamphlets of the period, they might possibly have found an explanation in that chapter of "The Twelve Cæsars" where Suetonius mentions Nero's rides in a litter with his mother Agrippina. We hasten to say, however, that Catherine de' Medici was bitterly hated, both as a Catholic and as a foreigner ; and it is not necessary to believe without examination all that was said of her in the lampoons, songs, and satires of the time, issued, for the most part, by Calvinist presses. The early death of the young princes François and Charles, to whom Henri was preferred by their mother, contributed not a little to give credibility to all those evil reports which have come down across the centuries, and have reached our own time invested with an authenticity that is almost historic.

The Princess Élisabeth, although a year younger than the dauphin, seemed more mature than he. Her birth had been associated with public rejoicings, as well as the source of private satisfaction ; for at the very date of her birth articles of peace were signed between King François I. and King Henry VIII. She who by her marriage was to establish peace with Spain was related by the date of

her birth to the peace with England. Her father, Henri II., so highly estimated her beauty and her character that, upon the marriage of her younger sister, Madame Claude, to the Duc de Lorraine, he replied to some one who remonstrated with him on the wrong done by that marriage to his elder daughter, still unmarried : " My daughter Elisabeth is not of those who would be satisfied with a duchy for a dowry ; she must have a kingdom, and it must not be a kingdom of secondary importance, but one of the grandest and noblest, — she is herself so grand and noble in everything."

She had the promised kingdom, and with it unhappiness and death.

Alas ! no better fortune awaited the beautiful Mary Stuart, who rode at the left of the dauphin, her betrothed.

There are misfortunes which have made such a noise in the world that they have awakened an echo everywhere, and after drawing to their victims the observation of those living at the time, they still, across the centuries, whenever recalled by the utterance of a name, draw to these victims the attention of posterity.

Such were the misfortunes, but little merited, of the beautiful Mary Stuart, — misfortunes which so far transcended the ordinary allotment that the faults, the crimes even of the victim, are overshadowed by the excess of punishment.

But at this time the young queen of Scotland was joyously pursuing her way in a life saddened at the outset by the death of her father, the chivalric James V. Her mother wore in her stead that crown of Scotland, full of thorns, which, according to the last words of her father, " came wi' a lass, and would gang wi' a lass." She had arrived at Morlaix August 20, 1548, and then for the first time had touched the soil of France, where

she spent her only happy days. She brought with her that garland of Scotch roses which was called "the four Marys," consisting of four girls who were of her own age to the year and the month, and whose names were Mary Fleming, Mary Seaton, Mary Livingston, and Mary Beaton. She was at that time an adorable child, and gradually, as she grew older, she had become an adorable young woman. Her uncles — the Guises, who thought they saw in her the realization of their ambitious projects, and who, not content with extending their domination over France, would extend it through her mediation over Scotland, and perhaps even over England — surrounded her with a veritable worship. For example, the Cardinal de Lorraine wrote to his sister Marie de Guise : "Your daughter has improved, and is improving day by day, in goodness, beauty, and virtue. The king spends his time in chatting with her, and she knows how to entertain him with good and wise answers, as if she were a woman twenty-five years old."

The bud of that glowing rose had yet to open itself to love and pleasure. Mary, unable to do what gave her no enjoyment, passionately engaged in everything she liked. If she danced, she danced till she fell exhausted ; if she rode, it was at a gallop, till the best of racers would be tired out ; if she attended a concert, the music shook her with electric thrills. Sparkling with jewelry, caressed, flattered, adored, she was, at thirteen years of age, one of the wonders of that court of the Valois, so full of wonders. Catherine de' Medici, who loved nothing much except her son Henri, said, "Our little Scotch queenlet has only to smile to turn all heads." Ronsard said :—

" Mid the blossoms of spring, in a lily she came,
And her whiteness the lily's own white put to shame.

Yet her color is such that the roses, blood-red,
Compared with her lips appear faded and dead.
Love with his best touches fashioned her eyes,
And the Graces — those daughters three of the skies —
. Their most beautiful gifts on this princess bestowed,
And to serve her the better forsook their abode."

The princess could well appreciate the most subtle significance of these charming tributes. Prose and verse were alike intelligible to her. She could talk in Greek Latin, Italian, English, Spanish, and French. Poetry and science paid homage to her, and other arts looked to her for encouragement. In her travels with the court from one residence to another, she went from St. Germain to Chambord, from Chambord to Fontainebleau, from Fontainebleau to the Louvre. She lived among the ceilings of Primatice, the canvases of Titian, the frescos of Rosso, the masterpieces of Leonardo da Vinci, the statues of Germain Pilon, the sculptures of Jean Goujon, and the monuments, porticos, and chapels of Philibert Delorme; so that any one who should see her, so poetic, so charming, so perfect, amid all these marvels of genius, might easily believe that she was not a creature of the human species, but had been produced by some metamorphosis like that of Galatea,— that she was some Venus detached from her canvas, some Hebe who had stepped down from her pedestal.

And now we, who cannot wield the painter's brush, will try to give, with the novelist's pen, some idea of that intoxicating beauty.

She was, as we have said, nearly fourteen years of age. Her complexion combined the tints of the lily, the peach, and the rose, with perhaps a little more of the lily than of the others. Her high forehead, rounded out in its upper part, seemed the seat of a proud reserve, and at

the same time — strange combination! — full of gentleness, intelligence, and audacity. It would be surmised that the will behind that forehead, should it incline toward love and pleasure, would overleap the bounds of ordinary passions, and to satisfy voluptuous and despotic desire would proceed even to crime. Her nose, slender and delicate but strong, was aquiline, like those of the house of Guise. Her ears were small, and curved like iridescent shells beneath her throbbing temples. Her brown eyes, of a hue between the chestnut and the violet, were of a moist transparency, yet full of fire, under their auburn lids and eyebrows formed with classic precision. Finally, two charming curves completed, at their two angles, a mouth with red lips, tremulous, half open, which, when she smiled, seemed to spread joy around her, — above a chin fresh, white, rounded, and merging into outlines which led by imperceptible gradations to a neck undulous and velvety, like that of a swan.

Such was she whom Ronsard and Du Bellay called their “tenth muse.” Such was the head which, thirty-one years later, was to lie on the block of Fotheringay, and which was to fall from the body under the axe of Elizabeth’s executioner.

Alas! if a magician could have announced to the spectators who gazed upon that brilliant cavalcade, as it passed under the great trees in the park of St. Germain, the fate which awaited those kings, those princes, those princesses, those grand noblemen, those elegant ladies, would any one of them, though clad in coarsest garb, have wished to exchange his lot for that of those fine noblemen in doublets of silk and of velvet, or of those elegant ladies in garments adorned with pearls and gold?

Let us leave them passing under the vaulted arches of the chestnut-trees and the beeches, and return to the château of St. Germain, where, as we have said, Catherine de' Medici remained at home upon the pretext of a slight indisposition.

CHAPTER II.

THE ROYAL HUNT.

SCARCELY had the squires and pages forming the rear rank of the cortége disappeared in the depths of the coves which succeeded the tall trees, and which at this period surrounded the park of St. Germain like a girdle, before Catherine withdrew from the balcony, taking with her Charles and Henri. Sending the elder to his tutor and the younger to her ladies, she remained alone with the little Marguerite, who was still so young that there was no occasion for concern as to what she might see or hear.

She had just sent away her two sons, when her confidential servant entered, announcing that the two persons whom she expected were in attendance in her cabinet. She rose at once, hesitated a moment about sending away her daughter as she had sent her sons; but thinking, doubtless, that her presence would do no harm, she proceeded to her cabinet.

Catherine de' Medici was at that time a woman thirty-eight years of age, of beautiful and voluptuous form, and of commanding dignity. She had a pleasing countenance, a most beautiful neck, and perfect hands. Her black eyes were almost always half closed, except when she needed to search the heart of her adversaries; then their glance possessed the lustre and sharpness of two blades drawn from their scabbards and plunged at once into the

same breast, where they remained buried, as it were, until they had explored its innermost depths.

She had suffered much, and concealed it under a smiling countenance. At first, during the ten earlier years of her married life, which were barren, and during which the question of repudiating her and giving the dauphin another wife was twenty times considered, the love of the latter alone protected her and resisted desperately the most terrible and inexorable of all arguments, — the welfare of the State. At last, in 1544, after eleven years of marriage, she gave birth to Prince François. But already, for nine years, her husband had been the lover of Diane de Poitiers.

Perhaps, if from the beginning of her married life she had been a happy mother and a fruitful wife, she would have contended as wife and as queen against the beautiful duchess ; but her sterility reduced her to the rank of a mistress. Instead of contending she submitted, and by her humility gained the protection of her rival.

Besides, all that splendid nobility of the sword, those brilliant soldiers who valued rank only when it was a flower grown in blood and culled on the field of battle, held in light estimation the commercial race of the Medici. They made sport of their name and their coat-of-arms ; their ancestors were doctors (*medici*) ; their arms were not cannon-balls, as they pretended, but pills. Mary Stuart herself, who would caress the Duchesse de Valentinois with her pretty hand, soft as an infant's, would sometimes make of that soft hand a paw with which to scratch Catherine. “Are you coming with us to see the Florentine tradeswoman ?” she would say to the Constable de Montmorency.

Catherine bore all these insults ; she waited. For what did she wait ? She herself did not know. Henri II.,

her royal husband, was of the same age with herself, and the state of his health gave promise of a long life. Nevertheless, she waited with the pertinacity of one who, knowing and appreciating his own value, feels that as God makes nothing in vain the future must have something in reserve for him. At this time she had attached herself to the Guise party.

Henri, weak in character, could never rule by himself ; sometimes it was with the assistance of the constable, and then the Guises were at a disadvantage ; then again, the Guises were his co-rulers, and the constable was in disgrace.

The House of Guise was noble and powerful. One day when Duc Claude, accompanied by his six sons, went to pay his respects to King François I. at the Louvre, the king said to him, "Cousin, you must be a happy man to see yourself reproduced, before you die, in so fine and numerous a posterity."

And certainly Duc Claude, when he died, left a family which was the richest, most talented, and most ambitious in the kingdom. These six brothers, whom their father had presented to François I., had altogether an income of about eight hundred thousand francs, — that is to say, more than four millions of our money.

The eldest, who was called Duc François le Balafré, was the Grand Duc de Guise. His position at court was almost that of a prince of the blood. He had a chaplain, a treasurer, eight secretaries, twenty pages, and a retinue of eighty gentlemen ; a kennel whose dogs were second only to those of the royal stock ; stables containing horses from Africa, Turkey, and Spain ; perches full of gerkfalcons and hawks of priceless value, which had been sent him by Soliman and other infidel princes, who thus paid homage to his renown. The King of Navarre wrote

to him announcing the birth of his son, afterward Henri IV. The Constable de Montmorency himself, the most haughty nobleman of his time, in writing to him began his letter with "Monseigneur," and closed it with "Your most humble and most obedient servant;" and in reply the duke would say, "Monsieur le Connétable," and "Your very good friend," — a statement, by the way, which was not true, for the houses of Guise and Montmorency were in eternal feud.

It is necessary to have recourse to the chronicles of the time, whether unfolded by the aristocratic pen of the Sieur de Brantôme, or recorded every hour in the journal of the Grand Crier, Pierre de l'Estoille, in order to have an idea of the power of this privileged and tragic race, conspicuous in the street as on the battle-field, and listened to in the market-place as well as in the cabinets of the Louvre, Windsor, or the Vatican, — especially when represented by Duc François himself. Go into the Museum of Artillery and look at the breastplate worn by the eldest Guise at the siege of Metz, and you will see on it the marks of five balls, three of which alone would certainly have been fatal if their force had not been deadened by the rampart of steel.

It was therefore a cause of rejoicing to the inhabitants of Paris whenever he emerged from the Hôtel de Guise, and when, more generally known and more popular than the king himself, mounted upon "Fleur-de-lis" or "Mouton," — these were his two favorite horses, — dressed in his doublet and small-clothes of crimson silk, his velvet cloak, his cap surmounted by a plume of the same color as his doublet, and followed by four hundred gentlemen, he rode through the streets of the capital. Then every one hastened to see him pass, — some throwing branches of trees before him, and others strewing flow-

ers under his horse's feet, crying out, "Long live our duke!"

And he, rising in his stirrups, — as he was accustomed to do in the battle-field, in order to extend his view and expose himself to danger, — bowing to right and left, saluting courteously the women, men, and aged persons, smiling upon the young girls, caressing the children, — was the true king, not of the Louvre, of St. Germain, of Fontainebleau or the Tournelles, but the king of the streets, the squares, and the market-places, — the true king, the real king, since he was the king of hearts!

So, at the risk of breaking the truce of which France had so much need, when Pope Paul III. — on account of a private quarrel with Colonna, whom the support he expected from Philip II. had rendered sufficiently bold to take up arms against the Holy See — declared the King of Spain dethroned from his sovereignty of Naples, and offered this sovereignty to Henry II., the king did not hesitate to appoint the Duc François de Guise general-in-chief of the army which he was to send into Italy.

It is true that on this occasion and for the first time Guise and Montmorency were of one mind. With François de Guise out of France, Anne de Montmorency would be the first personage in the kingdom ; and while the great captain was prosecuting on the other side of the mountains his projects of glory, Montmorency, who considered himself a great politician, could pursue at the court his ambitious projects, the most urgent of which at that moment was to marry his son to Madame Diane, legitimate daughter of the Duchesse de Valentinois, and widow of the Duke of Castro, of the house of Farnese, who was killed at the assault of Hesdin.

Monsieur le Duc François de Guise, then, was at Rome fighting against the Duke of Alva.

The second son of this family of Guise was the Cardinal of Lorraine, who was no less able than his brother, and whom Pius V. called "the pope beyond the mountains." He was, says the author of the "*Histoire de Marie Stuart*," a diplomatist of twofold strength, having the audacity of a Guise and the subtlety of an Italian. Later on he conceived, matured, and put in execution that grand idea of the League, which led his nephew gradually near the throne, until the moment when uncle and nephew were struck down by the sword of the Forty-five. When the six Guises were at court, the four younger ones — the Duc d'Aumale, the grand prior, the Marquis d'Elbeuf, and the Cardinal de Guise — never failed to come, in the first place, to the morning reception of Cardinal Charles; then all five attended the morning reception of Duc François, who accompanied them to that of the king.

These two elder Guises — one after the manner of a soldier, and the other like a cardinal — had erected their batteries with a view to the future. Duc François had made himself the king's master; Cardinal Charles had become the queen's lover. The grave L'Estoile speaks of the matter in a way which leaves in the mind of the most incredulous reader no further doubt on the subject. "One of my friends," he says, "told me that once when he occupied, together with the cardinal's valet, a room adjoining that of the queen mother, he saw toward midnight the said cardinal, with a dressing-gown only thrown over his shoulders, making his way to the queen's room, and that his friend told him that it would be at the risk of his life that he spoke of what he had seen."

It would take too long to describe the other princes of the house of Guise who play an insignificant part in the course of this story. We will confine ourselves, there-

fore, to the portraits we have just drawn, insufficient as they are, of Duc François and Cardinal Charles.

It was this Cardinal Charles — who had been seen going at night to the queen's apartment with only a dressing-gown thrown over his shoulders — who was waiting for Catherine de' Medici in her cabinet.

Catherine expected to find him there; but she expected to find him alone. He was, in fact, accompanied by a young man twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, elegantly dressed, although evidently in travelling costume.

"Ah, it is you, Monsieur de Nemours!" exclaimed the queen, as she perceived the young man; "you come from Italy. What news from Rome?"

"Bad, Madame!" replied the cardinal, while the Duc de Nemours saluted the queen.

"Bad! Has our dear cousin, the Duc de Guise, been defeated?" asked Catherine. "Take care! do not say yes, for I shall not believe it; such a thing would be impossible!"

"No, Madame," replied the Duc de Nemours, "Monsieur de Guise has not been defeated; as you say, that would be impossible! But he has been betrayed by Caraffa, abandoned even by the pope, and he has despatched me to inform the king that his position is no longer tenable, with honor either to himself or France, and to beg either for speedy reinforcements or his instant recall."

"And according to our agreement, Madame," said the cardinal, "I have brought Monsieur de Nemours first to you."

"But," said Catherine, "the recall of Monsieur de Guise means relinquishing the pretensions of the King of France to the kingdom of Naples, and my claims to the duchy of Tuscany."

"Yes," said the cardinal; "but remember, Madame, that it cannot be long before we have war in France, and that then it will not be a question of reconquering Naples and Florence, but of protecting Paris."

"What! Paris! You jest, Monsieur le Cardinal! It seems to me that France can defend France, and that Paris can protect itself."

"I fear that you are mistaken, Madame," replied the cardinal. "Our best troops, depending on the truce, have gone to Italy with my brother; and certainly, had it not been for the incomprehensible conduct of Cardinal Caraffa,—had it not been for the treachery of the Duke of Parma, who has so far forgotten what he owes to the King of France as to make common cause with the emperor, an advance movement upon Naples and the necessity King Philip would be under of weakening his forces in order to protect Naples, would have prevented an attack upon France. But now that Philip is assured that he has men enough in Italy to hold us in check, he will turn his attention toward France, and will not fail to take advantage of its weakness. Besides, this prank of the constable's nephew apparently justifies the King of Spain in breaking the truce."

"You refer to his descent upon Douai?" said Catherine.

"Exactly."

"Listen!" said the queen. "You know that I detest the admiral as heartily as you do; therefore procure his downfall if you can. I will not hinder you, but, on the contrary, will give you all the aid in my power."

"In the mean time upon what do you decide?" said the cardinal. And seeing that Catherine hesitated, he continued: "Oh, you can speak before Monsieur de Nemours! He belongs to Savoy, it is true, but is as

much our friend as his cousin Emmanuel Philibert is our enemy."

"Decide yourself, Cardinal," said Catherine, throwing a side glance at the prelate; "I am but a woman, whose weak mind is little fitted for politics."

The cardinal understood Catherine's glance. She had no friends; she had only accomplices.

"Still, Madame," said Charles de Guise, "give an opinion, and I will use the privilege of opposing it if it does not agree with my own."

"Well, then, I think," said Catherine, "that the king, being the sole head of the State, should be the first to receive important information. In my opinion, then, if Monsieur le Duc is not too fatigued, he should remount his horse, rejoin the king wherever he may be, and deliver to him before any one else the news which in your friendship for me, my dear Cardinal, you have brought first to me, much to my regret."

The cardinal turned toward the Duc de Nemours inquiringly. But the latter, bowing, said, "Monseigneur, I am never fatigued when I can be employed in the king's service."

"In that case," said the cardinal, "you shall have a fresh horse; and I will take the risk of notifying the secretaries that the king will hold a council immediately upon his return from the hunt. Follow me, Monsieur de Nemours!"

The young duke saluted the queen respectfully, and was about to follow Monsieur le Cardinal de Lorraine, when Catherine touched lightly the latter's arm.

"After you, Monsieur de Nemours," said Charles de Guise.

"Monseigneur—" said Jacques de Nemours, hesitating.

"Lead the way, I entreat you."

"And I," said the queen, extending her beautiful hand, — "I command you, Monsieur le Duc!"

The duke, concluding that doubtless the queen had some private business with the cardinal, made no further difficulty about taking precedence; and kissing the queen's hand, he went out, purposely allowing the curtain to fall behind him.

"What is it, my dear Queen?" asked the cardinal.

"I wanted to tell you," replied Catherine, "that the good King Louis XI., who in consideration of a loan of five hundred thousand crowns gave our ancestor Laurent de' Medici permission to add three fleurs-de-lis to our coat-of-arms, used to say, 'If my night-cap knew my secret, I would burn my night-cap!' Remember this maxim of the good King Louis XI., my dear Cardinal. You are too confiding!"

It amused the cardinal that this piece of advice should be given him, who was considered the most cautious of politicians; he had met with a caution greater than his own in the person of the Florentine Catherine de' Medici.

The cardinal in his turn stepped beyond the curtains, and saw the prudent young man, who, that he might not be accused of listening, was waiting for him at the end of the corridor. They descended together into the courtyard, where Charles de Guise ordered a groom to bring instantly a horse saddled and bridled. The groom returned in five minutes leading the horse. Nemours sprang into the saddle with the grace of an accomplished horseman, and set off at full gallop down the broad avenue of the park.

The young man had been told that he would probably find the royal hunting-party somewhere near the road to Poissy. He therefore laid his course in that direction, hoping that when he arrived at the start the sound of

the horns would guide him to the king. But in the vicinity of the road to Poissy he saw and heard nothing. A wood-cutter whom he questioned told him that the hunting-party had gone toward Conflans ; so he turned his horse's head in that direction.

In about a quarter of an hour, while riding up a cross-road, he saw in an open place just before him a cavalier, who was rising in his stirrups in order to see farther, and putting his hands to his ears in order to hear better.

This cavalier was a hunter, who evidently had become separated from the hunting-party. But although this hunter had lost his way, he would be likely to know more of the probable locality of the hunt than the young duke who had arrived from Italy scarcely a half-hour before. Therefore Monsieur de Nemours rode up to the hunter.

The latter, seeing a cavalier approach him, and supposing he had found some one who could enlighten him as to the progress of the hunt, also advanced.

But in a moment both put spurs to their horses ; they had recognized each other.

The cavalier who had lost the hunt, who was trying to ascertain his whereabouts by rising in his stirrups to see and putting his hands to his ears to hear, was the captain of the Scotch Guards.

The two cavaliers accosted each other with that courteous familiarity which distinguished the young noblemen of that period. Besides, although one, the Duc de Nemours, was of a princely house, the other, the Comte de Montgomery, belonged to the oldest Norman nobility, and was a descendant of that Roger de Montgomery who had been with William the Bastard at the conquest of England.

Now, there were in France some old names which were

considered of equal rank with the names which were the most powerful and glorious, notwithstanding the inferiority of the titles they bore. For instance, there were the Montmorencys, who had only the title of baron ; the Rohans were only seigneurs ; there were the Coucys, who were only sires, and the Montgomerys, who were only counts.

As the Duc de Nemours had imagined, Montgomery had lost the hunt, and was trying to find out where he was. The place he had chosen was well fitted for this purpose ; it was an open place upon an elevation to which every sound would rise, and overlooked five or six roads through one of which the hunted animal would not fail to pass.

The two young men, who had not seen each other for more than six months, had a thousand important questions to ask each other,—Montgomery, on the subject of the army and the glorious enterprises of war in which Monsieur de Guise would naturally embark ; the other, about the court of France and the fine intrigues which were carried on there.

They had reached the most interesting part of the conversation, when Comte de Montgomery laid his hand upon the duke's arm. He thought he heard the baying of the hounds in the distance. Both listened. The count was not mistaken ; for just then they saw at the end of a long path an enormous boar passing with the speed of an arrow. About fifty steps behind him followed the fiercest of the dogs ; then the bulk of the pack, and after them the stragglers.

Montgomery instantly put his horn to his mouth and sounded the view halloo, in order to call together those who, like himself, might be wandering astray,—of whom there must have been a considerable number, for three

persons only, a man and two women, followed in the track of the animal.

By the ardor with which the man followed the chase, the two officers imagined that they recognized the king ; but the distance was so great that it was impossible to say who were the two bold amazons who followed him so closely.

All the rest of the hunting-party seemed to have been scattered.

The Due de Nemours and the Comte de Montgomery dashed into a path which, from the direction taken by the animal, would enable them to cross the course of the chase at right angles.

The king had indeed roused near the road to Poissy the animal, which in terms of venery is called a *ragot*. It had broken cover with that ferocity which characterizes old animals, and headed straight for Conflans. The king had immediately set out in pursuit, sounding the start ; and all the court had followed the king.

But boars are bad courtiers ; and this particular boar, instead of keeping to the open forest and good roads, had dashed into the thickest coppice-wood and brambles ; the consequence of which was that after a quarter of an hour only the most inveterate of the hunters followed the king closely, and of all the ladies three only kept up with him : these were Madame Marguerite, the king's sister ; Diane de Poitiers ; and Mary Stuart, the little "queenlet," as Catherine called her.

In spite of the courage of the illustrious hunters and huntresses of whom we have just spoken, the difficulties of the ground, the thickness of the forest, which obliged the horsemen to take a circuitous way, the height of the bushes which it was impossible to clear, would soon have allowed the boar and the dogs to disappear in the distance ; but at the very edge of the forest the animal

had encountered the wall, which obliged him to retrace his steps.

The king, left behind for the moment, but relying on his pack of greyhounds, had paused to await the result. This afforded some of the hunters an opportunity to rejoin him; but soon the baying of the dogs was heard once more.

That part of the forest toward which the animal now turned was more open than the rest; the consequence was that this time the king could resume the chase with the probability of continuing it to the end.

But, as had been the case ten minutes before, each one held to the pursuit with a persistence limited to his endurance and courage. Besides, among the handsome noblemen and charming women who constituted this court many perhaps fell behind who were not absolutely compelled to it by the incompetence of their horses, the thickness of the wood, or by the inequalities of the ground; indeed, this was clearly proved by the groups of gentlemen and ladies which were seen at the corners of the avenues and in the open places, who seemed more interested in the conversations in which they were engaged than in listening for the baying of the dogs and the horn of the huntsmen. And this explains the fact that when Montgomery and Nemours caught sight of the boar, it was followed only by a cavalier whom the young men thought they recognized as the king, and by two ladies whom they could not distinguish.

It was in fact the king, who with his usual ardor wished to arrive in advance of the others, at the moment when the boar, brought to a stand, should place himself before some tree, bush, or rock, and make head against the dogs.

The two amazons who were close behind him were

Madame de Valentinois and the little Queen Mary, of whom the former was the best, and the latter the boldest horsewoman among the court ladies.

Now the boar was flagging, and evidently could hold out no longer; already the foremost dogs were at his heels. For a quarter of an hour more, however, he tried to escape his enemies by flight; but perceiving that he was nearly overtaken, he determined to die a noble death, the proper death of a boar; grunting, and working his huge jaws, he took his stand against the upturned roots of a tree.

Scarcely had he done this, when the whole pack rushed upon him, and announced by their redoubled barking that the animal had turned to bay.

The sound of the king's horn was soon mingled with the barking of the dogs, which he followed as closely as they themselves followed the animal.

As he sounded his horn he turned to look for his gun-bearer; but Henri had distanced all the most inveterate huntsmen, even those whose duty it was never to leave him, and saw only Diane and Mary Stuart — who, as we have said, had persisted in the chase — coming after him at full speed.

Not a lock of the beautiful Duchesse de Valentinois's hair was out of place, and her velvet cap was fastened upon the top of her head as firmly as at the moment of setting out.

As for the little Mary, she had lost veil and cap; and her beautiful auburn hair, dishevelled by the wind, as well as the charming glow upon her cheeks, bore witness to the wildness of her ride.

The sound of the king's horn soon brought up the gun-bearer, with an arquebuse in his hand and another on the pommel of his saddle. Behind him, through the

trees, were seen the glitter of gold embroideries, and the bright colors of dresses, doublets, and cloaks. These belonged to the hunters, who were advancing from every direction.

The animal did his best; attacked at once by sixty dogs, he held his own against them all. While the sharpest teeth were dulled upon his tough hide, the blows of his tusk produced deep wounds upon the adversary on whom they fell. But although mortally wounded, and notwithstanding their loss of blood, their trailing entrails, the king's grays, as they were called, were of so noble a breed that they only returned fiercer to the combat; and the multitudinous spots of blood which stained this carpet of living green were the only evidence of wounds.

The king saw that it was time to put an end to this butchery, or he would lose his best dogs. He threw down his horn, and motioned his gun-bearer to give him an arquebuse.

The match was already lighted, and the gun-bearer had only to hand the weapon to the king, who was an excellent shot and rarely missed his aim. Arquebuse in hand, he advanced to within twenty-five feet of the boar, whose eyes shone like burning coals. He aimed between the animal's eyes, and fired.

The animal had received the charge in the head, but by a movement made at the moment when the king was pulling the trigger, had turned his head to one side, so that the ball had just grazed the bone, and killed one of the dogs. On the boar's head, between the eye and ear, a line of blood was seen, indicating the course the ball had taken.

Henri remained for a moment astonished that the animal had not fallen dead; while his horse, trembling all

over, settled on his haunches and pawed the air with his forefeet. He handed to the huntsman the discharged arquebuse, and took from him in exchange another already primed and lighted, and laid the breach against his shoulder.

But before he had time to aim, the boar, unwilling doubtless to run the risk of a second shot, suddenly shook off the dogs which were clinging around him, made a charge through the pack, leaving a bloody trail behind him, and quick as lightning rushed between the legs of the king's horse, which reared upon his hind legs with a cry of pain, exposing to view a wound from which blood flowed and entrails dropped, and then fell, with the king under him.

All this happened so suddenly that it had not occurred to one of the spectators to make an attack on the boar, who had renewed his charge upon the king before the latter had time to draw his hunting-knife. Henri tried to get hold of it, but it was impossible ; the hunting-knife was held fast under his left side.

Brave as the king was, he had already opened his mouth to cry for help,—for the hideous head of the boar, with its eyes of fire, its bloody mouth, and its sharp tusks, was right upon him,—when suddenly he heard, close to his ear, a voice whose firmness of tone there is no mistaking, say, “Do not stir, Sire ; I will answer for your safety.” Then he felt his arm raised, and saw a long sharp blade flash quickly by him and plunge itself into the body of the boar.

At the same time two strong arms seized Henri from behind, drawing him from under the horse, leaving the king's defender exposed to the attacks of the animal to which he had just given the death-blow.

He who drew the king from his dangerous position was

the Duc de Nemours ; the other, who with one knee on the ground and with arm extended had just run his sword through the boar's heart, was the Comte de Montgomery.

The Comte de Montgomery drew his sword from the animal's body, wiped it upon the long grass, replaced it in its scabbard, and advancing toward Henri II. as if nothing extraordinary had happened, "Sire," he said, "I have the honor to present to you Monsieur le Duc de Nemours, who comes from beyond the mountains, and who is the bearer of news to the king from Monsieur le Duc de Guise and his brave army in Italy."

CHAPTER III.

CONSTABLE AND CARDINAL.

Two hours after the scene we have just described,—when the real or affected agitation in the minds of those present had subsided; when congratulations had been offered to the Comte de Montgomery and the Duc de Nemours, the two saviors of the king, upon the courage and adroitness they had displayed on this occasion; when the quarry—an important matter, which was never neglected for the most serious business—was distributed among the dogs in the courtyard of the château in presence of the king, the queen, and all the gentlemen and ladies of the court at St. Germain,—Henri II., with the smiling face of a man who has just escaped mortal peril, and who feels strong and full of life in proportion as the peril has been great, entered his cabinet, where, besides his ordinary councillors, Cardinal Charles de Lorraine and Constable de Montmorency awaited him.

We have already two or three times spoken of the Constable de Montmorency; but we have neglected to do for him what we have done for the other heroes of this story,—that is to say, raise him from his tomb and place him before our readers, like the celebrated Constable de Bourbon, whom his soldiers carried after his death to the house of an artist, that the latter might make a portrait of him, erect and fully armed, as he had appeared in life.

Anne de Montmorency was the head of that old house of Christian barons, or Barons of France, as their title was, descended from Bouchard de Montmorency, which has given to the kingdom ten constables.

His name and his titles were as follows: Anne de Montmorency, Duke, Marshal, Grand Master, Constable, and First Baron of France, Chevalier de St. Michel and de la Jarretière; Captain of one hundred of the king's orderlies; Governor and Lieutenant-General of the Languedoc; Comte de Beaumont, Dammartin, de la Fère-en-Tardenois, and Châteaubriant; Vicomte de Melun and Montreuil; Baron d'Amville, de Préaux, de Montbron, d'Offemont, de Mello, de Châteauneuf, de la Rochepot, de Dangu, de Méru, de Thoré, de Savoisy, de Gourville, de Derval, de Chanceaux, de Rougé, d'Aspremont, and de Maintenay; Seigneur d'Ecouen, de Chantilly, de l'Isle-Adam, de Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, de Nogent, de Valmontois, de Compiègne, de Ganelu, de Marigny, and de Thourout.

As is seen by this catalogue of titles, the king might be king in Paris, but Montmorency was duke, count, baron, all about Paris; so that the dignity of royalty seemed to be confined to his duchies, earldoms, and baronies.

Born in 1493, he was at the time of which we write an old man sixty-four years old, who, although he looked his age, possessed the strength and vigor of a man of thirty. Violent and brutal, he had all the rougher qualities of the soldier,— blind courage, thoughtlessness of danger, and insensibility to fatigue, hunger, and thirst. Full of pride, puffed up with vanity, he acknowledged himself inferior only to the Duc de Guise,— or rather to his rank as Prince de Lorraine; for as a general and commander of expeditions, he considered himself im-

mensely superior to the defender of Metz and conqueror at Renty. For him Henri II. was only the little master; François I. had been the great master, and he would acknowledge no other. An uncommon courtier, headstrong in his ambition for power, he obtained by rebuffs and brutalities advantages for the increase of his fortune and power which another would have gained by complaisance and kindness. Diane de Valentinois, too, helped him very much in some cases where, but for her, he would have failed; coming after him with her gentle voice, her sweet smile, and pleasant face, she set to rights everything which the limitless anger of the soldier had put in confusion. He had already been engaged in four great battles, and in each one he had performed the labor of a vigorous man-at-arms, but in none of them had he distinguished himself as an intelligent leader.

These four battles were as follows: First, that which took place at Ravenna; he was then eighteen years old, and followed, for his own pleasure and as volunteer, what was called the general standard,—or, in other words, the standard of the volunteers. The second battle was that of Marignano; there he commanded a company of one hundred men-at-arms, and he might have been able to boast that his hand had dealt the most vigorous sword-thrusts and sledge-hammer blows if there had not been by his side, and often in advance of him, his great master François I., that hundred-handed giant, who might have made a conquest of the world, if that conquest had devolved upon him who should strike most vigorously and with the greatest rapidity. The third was the battle of La Bicoque, where he was colonel of the Guards; he there fought hand to hand, and was left for dead on the battle-field. Finally, the fourth was the battle of Pavia. He had at that time become marshal of France, through

the death of Monsieur de Châtillon, his brother-in-law. Expecting that the battle would take place the next day, he had set out in the night to reconnoitre ; at the sound of the cannon he had returned to camp, and was taken prisoner "like all the rest," says Brantôme ; and indeed at this calamitous defeat of Pavia everybody was taken prisoner, even the king.

Quite in contrast with Monsieur de Guise, who had great sympathy with the middle and professional classes, the constable detested the common people and execrated lawyers. He lost no opportunity of snubbing both. For instance, one very warm day, when a judge had come to confer with him in regard to the duties of his office, Monsieur de Montmorency received him with his hat in hand, and said, —

"Come, Monsieur le Juge, say quickly what you have to tell me, — and put on your hat."

The judge, thinking that it was out of respect for him that Montmorency kept his head uncovered, replied, "Monsieur, I will not put on my hat while you yourself remain with bare head."

The constable thereupon exclaimed : "What a great fool you are, Monsieur ! Do you think, perchance, that I remain uncovered for love of you ? Not at all, but for my own comfort, my friend, and lest I die of heat. I am listening ; go on."

The president, quite abashed, could only stammer in reply ; and Monsieur de Montmorency interrupted him with : " You are an idiot, Monsieur le Juge ! Go home, learn your lesson, and when you know it come back to me ; but not before." And he turned on his heel.

The inhabitants of Bordeaux had revolted ; and after they had killed their governor, the constable was sent against them. When they were informed that he was

coming, fearing that the reprisals would be heavy, they went to meet him the distance of two days' journey, carrying to him the keys of the city.

But he, who was on horseback and fully armed, said : "Gentlemen of Bordeaux, begone with your keys ; I do not want them." And pointing to his cannon, he continued : "See what I bring with me ; these guns will make an overture quite different from yours— Ah ! I will teach you to rebel against the king and kill his governor and his lieutenant. Understand that I will have you hanged !" And he kept his word.

At Bordeaux, Monsieur de Strozzi, who had passed his men in review before the constable the day before, came to pay his respects to him, although he was a relative of the queen. When Monsieur de Montmorency perceived him, he exclaimed : "Ah, good-day, Strozzi ! Your men did wonderfully well yesterday, and were truly worth seeing ; they shall have some money to-day, I have commanded it."

"Thanks, Monsieur le Connétable," replied Monsieur de Strozzi ; "I am very glad that you are satisfied with them, for I have a petition to offer you from them."

"What is it, Strozzi ? Speak !"

"Wood is very dear in this city, and they cannot afford to buy as much as they need, considering the severe cold ; they entreat you to give them a vessel called the 'Montréal,' lying on the strand, which is worth nothing, to break up for firewood."

"Yes, indeed, I am willing," said the constable ; "let them go right away, taking with them their camp-boys, and break it up for firewood."

But while he was at dinner, the aldermen of the city and the councillors of the court came to him to protest against the destruction of the vessel. Whether Mon-

sieur de Strozzi had seen incorrectly, or had relied on the reports of his soldiers, or was unable to distinguish an old vessel from a new one, — the vessel which he had ordered the soldiers to break up for firewood was still in condition for long and useful service. So these worthy magistrates had come to represent to the constable how great a loss would be incurred by the destruction of this fine vessel, which had made but two or three voyages, and whose capacity measured three hundred tons.

But the constable, in his ordinary tone, interrupted them almost as soon as they had begun : “ Well, well, well ! Who are you, fools, to presume to censure me ? Yet you are a clever set of idiots to be so bold as to remonstrate with me. If I should do the right thing, — and what is there to prevent ? — I should send the soldiers to demolish your houses instead of the vessel ; and that is what I will do, if you do not quickly take to your heels. Go home and attend to your own affairs, and let mine alone.” And on that very day the vessel was broken up.

During the reign of peace the constable poured out his most violent wrath upon the ministers of the reformed religion, against whom he cherished a fierce hatred. One of his diversions was to go into the temples in Paris and drive them from the pulpit ; and once when he had learned from the king that with the king’s permission they were holding a council, he hastened to Popincourt, forced his way into the assembly, overturned the pulpit, broke up all the benches and set them on fire ; on account of which expedition he was surnamed Captain Brûle-Bancs.

And all these brutalities the constable committed while mumbling prayers, especially the Lord’s Prayer,

which he most frequently repeated, and which he interlarded in the most grotesque manner with his barbarous and irrevocable commands.

Therefore it boded ill when he began to mumble his prayer. "Our Father who art in heaven," he said,— "Go, catch me such a one! — hallowed be thy name — Hang me that fellow to that tree! — Thy kingdom come — Run that other one through with a pike! — thy will be done — Shoot those rascals there in front of me! — upon the earth as it is in Heaven! — Cut in pieces those marauders for me, who tried to hold this tower against the king! — Give us each day our daily bread — Burn me this village! — Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have trespassed against us — Set fire to every corner, and let not a house escape! — and lead us not into temptation — If the villains cry out, throw them into the fire! — but deliver us from evil. Amen!"

This was called the constable's *Pater-noster*.

Such was the man whom, on entering his cabinet, King Henri II. found seated opposite the refined, intellectual, aristocratic Cardinal de Lorraine, the most courteous churchman, and the ablest political prelate of his time.

It is easy to understand the antagonism between these two natures so absolutely opposite, and the disturbance these ambitious rivals might cause in the State, — especially since the family of Montmorency was scarcely less numerous than the family of Guise, the constable having had by his wife, Madame de Savoy, daughter of Monsieur René, Bastard of Savoy and Grand Master of France, five sons — Messieurs de Montmorency, d'Amville, de Méru, de Montbron, and de Thoré — and five daughters, four of whom were married, respectively, to Messieurs de la Trémouille, de Turenne, de Ventadour, and de Candale;

and of whom the fifth, the most beautiful of all, became the Abbess of St. Pierre at Rheims.

Now, it was necessary to establish this numerous family, and the constable was anxiously planning for this establishment when the king arrived.

Every one arose and uncovered on perceiving Henri.

The king saluted Montmorency with a friendly and almost soldier-like gesture, while he turned to Charles de Lorraine with a deferential bow.

"I have summoned you, gentlemen," he said, "in order to consult you on a serious matter. Monsieur de Nemours has arrived from Italy, where our affairs are in a wretched condition, in consequence of the pope's failure to keep his word and the treachery of most of our allies. At first, everything progressed wonderfully well. Monsieur de Strozzi had taken Ostia, although it is true that we had lost in the trenches of the city Monsieur de Montluc,—a brave and worthy man, gentlemen, for whose soul I ask your prayers. Then the Duke of Alva, knowing of the approach of your illustrious brother, my dear Cardinal, withdrew to Naples. All the places in the vicinity of Rome, consequently, had been successively occupied by us. Indeed, after crossing the Milanese, the duke advanced toward Reggio, where his father-in-law, the Duke of Ferrara, awaited him with six thousand infantry and eight hundred horse. There a consultation was held between the Cardinal Caraffa and Jean de Lodèvre, the king's ambassador. It was thought by some that either Cremona or Pavia should be attacked, while the Maréchal de Brissac should divert the enemy; others were of the opinion that before they should have time to seize upon these two places, which are the best fortified in Italy, the Duke of Alva would have doubled his army by levying troops in Tuscany and in the kingdom of

Naples. Cardinal Caraffa had another plan ; he proposed to enter the military frontier of Ancona through Terra di Lavoro, every part of which was poorly fortified, and would yield to the first attack. But the Duke of Ferrara objected that the defence of the Holy See being the principal object of the campaign, the Duc de Guise should march straight to Rome. The Duc de Guise decided in favor of this last course, and wished to take with him the Duke of Ferrara's six thousand infantry and eight hundred horse ; but the latter retained them, saying that he might be attacked at any moment either by the Grand Duke Cosimo de' Medici or by the Duke of Parma.

" Monsieur le Duc de Guise, gentlemen, was therefore obliged to continue his course with the small number of troops which already accompanied him, depending only on the reinforcement which, according to Cardinal Caraffa, was waiting at Bologna to join the French army. Having arrived at Bologna with Monsieur le Cardinal, his nephew, the duke sought in vain for the reinforcement. There was none. Your brother, my dear Cardinal," continued the king, " did not conceal his dissatisfaction ; but he was promised that on reaching the neighborhood of Ancona he would find ten thousand fresh troops levied by the pope. The duke trusted to this promise, and continued his way through Romagna. No reinforcement awaited him there ; he left our army there in charge of the Duc d'Aumale, and proceeded directly to Rome to learn from the pope himself upon what he might rely. The pope, thus brought to the point by Monsieur de Guise, replied that he had a contingent of twenty-four thousand men for this war, but that among these twenty-four thousand men were included the men-at-arms guarding the strongholds of the Church. Now, eighteen thousand

papal soldiers distributed about in different places were occupied in this service. Monsieur de Guise saw that he could rely only on those men he had brought with him; but, according to the pope, these men would be sufficient, the French having heretofore failed in their attacks upon Naples only because the pope was opposed to them. But now, instead of being opposed to the French, he was on their side; and thanks to this co-operation, only moral and spiritual though it was, the French could not fail to succeed. Monsieur de Guise, my dear Constable," continued Henri, "is a little like you in this respect; he is never distrustful of fortune so long as he has his good sword by his side and a few thousand brave men to follow him. He sent in haste for his army, and when it had rejoined him he set out for Rome, attacked Campli, took the city by assault, and put to the edge of the sword men, women, and children."

The constable received the account of this achievement with the first visible sign of approbation he had given.

The cardinal remained unmoved.

"From Campli," continued the king, "the duke went to lay siege to Civitella, which is built, as it appears, upon a steep hill, and is protected by strong fortifications. He began by an attack on the fortress; but our army, with its usual impatience, was eager for an assault. Unfortunately, the place selected for this purpose was defended on all sides by bastions; the consequence was that our men were driven back, with a loss of two hundred killed and three hundred wounded."

A pleased smile flickered on the lips of the constable; the invincible had failed before a paltry fortress!

"Meanwhile," pursued the king, "the Duke of Alva, having collected his troops at Chieti, marched to the aid of the besieged with an army of three thousand Span-

iards, six thousand Germans, three thousand Italians, and three hundred Calabrians. This army was more than twice as large as that commanded by the Duc de Guise,—a fact which determined the duke to raise the siege, and go to await the enemy in the open country between Fermo and Ascoli. He hoped that the Duke of Alva would accept his offer of battle; but the Duke of Alva, sure that we shall suffer loss if left to ourselves, continues to hold aloof, and accepts neither encounter, combat, nor battle, or accepts them in positions which afford us no chance of success. In this situation, without hope of obtaining from the pope either men or money, Monsieur de Guise sends me Monsieur le Duc de Nemours to ask me either for large reinforcements or for permission to leave Italy and return home. What is your opinion, gentlemen? Shall we make a final effort and send to our dear Duc de Guise the men and money which he absolutely needs, or shall we recall him and by so doing renounce all claim to the possession of that beautiful Kingdom of Naples, which, on the promise of the pope, I had already designed for my son Charles?"

The constable signified by a gesture that he had something to say, at the same time indicating his readiness to give precedence to the Cardinal de Lorraine; but the latter by a slight movement of the head gave him to understand that he was free to speak. It was the cardinal's habitual practice to let his adversary speak first.

"Sire," said the constable, "it is my opinion that an affair so well begun should not be abandoned, and that your Majesty should make every effort to sustain in Italy your army and your general."

"And you, Monsieur le Cardinal?" said the king.

"I," said Charles de Lorraine, "ask the constable's pardon, but I am of a very different opinion."

"That does not surprise me, Monsieur le Cardinal," replied the constable, with acrimony; "it would be the first time that we were agreed. So in your opinion, Monsieur, your brother should be recalled?"

"I think it would be good policy to recall him."

"Alone, or accompanied by his army?" asked the constable.

"With his army, even to the last man!"

"And why? Do you think the highways are not sufficiently infested with bandits? For my part, I think they are abundant."

"The highways are perhaps sufficiently infested with robbers, Monsieur le Connétable, — they are perhaps abundant, as you say; but brave soldiers and great captains are not abundant."

"You forget, Monsieur le Cardinal, that this is a period of universal peace, and that in such times of peace we do not need valiant conquerors."

"I beg your Majesty," said the cardinal, addressing the king, "to ask Monsieur le Connétable if he seriously believes in the duration of this time of peace."

"*Morbleu!* if I believe in it!" said the constable, — "a pretty question!"

"Well, I, Sire," said the cardinal, "not only do not believe in it, but I am of the opinion that if your Majesty does not wish the King of Spain to have the glory of attacking us, we must hasten to attack the King of Spain."

"In spite of the truce solemnly sworn?" exclaimed the constable, with an earnestness which had the appearance of being genuine. "Do you forget, Monsieur le Cardinal, that it is a duty to keep an oath, that the king's word should be more inviolable than that of any other person, and that France never broke her

oath of fidelity, even in regard to the Turks and Saracens?"

"But in that case," demanded the cardinal, "how did it happen that your nephew Monsieur de Châtillon, instead of quietly attending to his own affairs in Picardy, made an attempt to surprise and escalade Douai, in which he would have succeeded had it not been for an old woman who happened to pass near the place where the ladders were placed, and who gave the alarm to the sentinels?"

"Why did my nephew do that?" exclaimed the constable, falling into the trap. "I will tell you why he did that."

"We are listening," said the cardinal. Then turning to the king, he said with significance, "Listen, Sire!"

"Oh, his Majesty knows as well as I, *mordieu!*!" said the constable; "for occupied as he seems to be with his love affairs, understand, Monsieur le Cardinal, that we do not leave the king in ignorance of the affairs of State."

"We are listening, Monsieur le Connétable," replied the cardinal, coldly. "You were about to tell us what reason Monsieur l'Amiral had for his attack upon Douai."

"What reason! I will tell you ten of them, and not one only, *mordieu!*!"

"Go on, Monsieur le Connétable."

"In the first place," replied the latter, "the attempt which Monsieur le Mègue, Governor of Luxembourg, himself made, through the instrumentality of his house-steward, who bribed for one thousand crowns cash and the promise of a pension of an equal sum three soldiers of the garrison of Metz, who were to deliver up the city."

"Which my brother so gloriously defended!" said the cardinal. "We have heard that attempt spoken of, which,

like that of your nephew the admiral, fortunately failed. But that is only one reason, and you promised us ten, Monsieur le Connétable."

"Oh, wait ! Do you not know, also, Monsieur le Cardinal, that this same Comte de Mègue had bribed a Provençal soldier of the garrison of Marienbourg, who in consideration of a large sum of money engaged to poison all the wells in the place, and that the project failed only because the count, fearing that one man would not be sufficient for the undertaking, applied to others, who divulged the secret of the plot ? *Mordieu !* you cannot say the story is false, Monsieur le Cardinal, since the soldier was put to the rack."

"That reasoning would not be quite sufficient to convince me ; you have in your day, Monsieur le Connétable, put to the rack and hanged not a few persons whom I consider to be as innocent and as truly martyrs as those who were put to death in the circus by those pagan emperors called Nero, Commodus, and Domitian."

"*Mordieu !* Monsieur le Cardinal, you deny, perhaps, that project of Monsieur le Comte de Mègue to poison the wells of Marienbourg ? "

"On the contrary, Monsieur le Connétable, I have told you that I admit it. But you have promised to give us ten reasons for the project of Monsieur, your nephew, and we have heard only two of them."

"You shall have them, *mordieu !* you shall have them ! Perhaps you do not know, for instance, that Monsieur le Comte de Berlaimont, treasurer of Flanders, had formed, jointly with two Gascon soldiers, a conspiracy, in which the latter, aided by Sieur de Vèze, captain of a company of foot soldiers, engaged to deliver up to the King of Spain the city of Bordeaux, provided they were backed by five or six hundred men ? Just deny this conspiracy

of the Catholic king, and I will answer that one of those two soldiers, arrested near St. Quentin by the governor of the place, has confessed everything, even that he had received the reward promised in the presence of Antoine Perrenot, Bishop of Arras. Come, *mordieu!* deny it, Monsieur le Cardinal, deny it ! ”

“ I will take good care not to do that,” said the cardinal, smiling, “ since it is indeed the truth, Monsieur le Connétable, and since I do not wish to trifle away the salvation of my soul by so great a falsehood ; but this makes, on the part of his Majesty the King of Spain, only three violations of the treaty of Vaucelles, and you have promised us ten.”

“ Yet once more I tell you you shall have your ten, *mordieu!* and, if necessary, you shall have even a dozen ! Ah ! for example, was not Maître Jacques la Flèche, one of the best engineers of King Philip II., arrested while taking soundings in the shallow places of the river Oise, and taken to La Fère, where he confessed that the Duke of Savoy, Emmanuel Philibert, had hired him, with money furnished by Monsieur de Berlaimont, to draw plans of Montreuil, Roye, Doulens, St. Quentin, Mézières, and other places which the Spaniards wanted to capture, in order to control Boulogne and Ardres, and cut off Marienbourg from supplies ? ”

“ That is perfectly true, Monsieur le Connétable ; but we are a long way from our ten.”

“ Eh, *mordieu!* do I need to give you ten reasons to show that in reality the truce is already broken on the part of Spain, and that if my nephew the admiral did make a descent upon Douai, he was perfectly right in doing so ? ”

“ And I had no intention of inducing you to say anything further, Monsieur le Connétable ; these four proofs

are quite sufficient to convince me that the truce has been broken by Philip II. Now, since the truce has been broken, not once, but four times, it is Philip II., King of Spain, who has failed to keep his pledge, and the King of France is justified in recalling from Italy his army and his general, and in preparing for war."

The constable bit his light mustaches ; the cunning of his adversary had trapped him into admitting just the opposite of what he meant to say.

The cardinal had hardly ceased speaking, and the constable biting his mustaches, when a trumpet, sounding a foreign air, was heard in the courtyard of the château of St. Germain.

"Oh, oh !" said the king, " who is that disagreeable joker of a page, who comes to torture my ears with an English air ? Go and inquire, Monsieur de l'Aubespine, and give the little fool a good flogging for this jesting."

Monsieur de l'Aubespine went to execute the king's orders, but returned in about five minutes, saying, —

"Sire, it is neither page nor squire nor huntsman who performed the air in question ; it is a real English trumpet which announces a herald sent by your cousin Queen Mary."

Monsieur de l'Aubespine had scarcely finished these words when another air was heard which they recognized as Spanish.

"Ah, ah !" said the king, " the husband follows the wife, as it seems."

Then, with that dignity which on occasion all the old kings of France knew so well how to assume, "Gentlemen," he said, "let us withdraw to the throne-room. Assemble your officers ; I will call together the court. Whatever may be the intelligence from our cousins Mary and Philip, we must do honor to their messengers."

CHAPTER IV.

WAR.

THE combined notes of the English and Spanish trumpets, like a double echo from the North and from the South, had been heard not only in the council-chamber but throughout the palace. The king found the court already informed of the new arrival ; the ladies were at the windows, gazing curiously at the two heralds and their suite.

At the door of the council-chamber the constable was met by a young officer whom his nephew the admiral had sent, — he who, as we have seen, visited the Emperor Charles V. on the evening of his abdication. The admiral was, as already mentioned, Governor of Picardy ; he therefore, in case of an invasion, would be especially exposed to attack.

“ Ah, is it you, Théligny ? ”¹ said the constable, in a low tone.

“ Yes, Monseigneur,” replied the young officer.

“ And you bring me news from the admiral ? ”

“ Yes, Monseigneur.”

“ You have seen no one, and have told no one ? ”

“ This intelligence is for the king, Monseigneur,” replied the young officer ; “ but I am instructed to communicate it to you first.”

¹ This Théligny is not to be confounded with the admiral’s son-in-law, who was killed on St. Bartholomew’s Day.

"Very well, follow me," said the constable.

And as the Cardinal de Lorraine had taken the Duc de Nemours to the apartment of Catherine de' Medici, so the constable conducted Monsieur de Thé ligny to that of the Duchesse de Valentinois.

Meanwhile the court had assembled in the throne-room. The king sat upon the throne, with the queen at his right; upon the steps of the throne stood the officers of the crown, while upon chairs around the throne were seated Mesdames Marguerite and Élisabeth of France, Mary Stuart, the Duchesse de Valentinois, the four Marys,—in short, all the members of the brilliant court of the Valois. The king gave orders to introduce the English herald.

Long before he appeared, the sound of his spurs and of those of the men-at-arms who formed his escort could be heard as they drew nearer; then at last he crossed the threshold, dressed in a tunic emblazoned with the arms of England and France, and advanced without uncovering his head until within a few steps of the king's throne. Then he bared his head, and kneeling on one knee spoke in a loud voice the following words:—

"Mary, Queen of England, Ireland, and France, to Henri, King of France, greeting! Inasmuch as you have held relations of friendship with the English Protestants, enemies of our person, our religion, and our government, and have afforded them succor and protection against our just pursuit of them, we, William Norry, herald of the crown of England, declare war against you by sea and land, and in token of defiance throw down before you the gauntlet." And the herald hurled his iron gauntlet upon the floor at the feet of the king.

"It is well," replied the king, without rising. "I accept this declaration of war; but I wish all the world to

know that I have kept faith with your queen,—a duty I owed to the pleasant friendship we have always entertained for each other; but since she attacks France so unjustly, I pray God that she shall have no better success than her ancestors had when they fought mine. I address you thus quietly and civilly because it is a queen who sends you; if it had been a king, I should have used a very different tone."

And turning to Mary Stuart, "My gentle Queen of Scotland," he said, "since you as well as I are concerned in this war, and since you have as much right to the crown of England as our sister Mary has to that of France, I beg you to pick up this gauntlet, and present to the brave Sir William Norry the gold chain which you wear about your neck, which my dear Duchesse de Valentinois will gladly replace with her necklace of pearls; and I promise that she shall not lose by so doing. Come!—a woman's hand must pick up a woman's gauntlet."

Mary Stuart rose, and with exquisite grace took the chain from her beautiful neck and threw it around that of the herald; then with that proud look which suited her face so well, "I pick up this gauntlet," she said, "not only in the name of France, but also in that of Scotland. Herald, tell this to our sister Mary."

The herald arose, and bowing slightly, withdrew to the left of the throne. "I will act according to the wishes of King Henri of France and Queen Mary of Scotland," he said.

"Admit the herald of our brother Philip II.," said Henri.

The same clatter of spurs was heard announcing the Spanish herald, whose manner as he approached was even more haughty than that of his colleague. Stroking his Castilian mustache, he advanced to within a few

steps of the king, and without kneeling, but simply bowing, said, —

“ Philip, by divine grace King of Castile, Leon, Granada, Navarre, Aragon, Naples, Sicily, Majorca, Sardinia, of the Indies and islands of Oceanica ; Archduke of Austria ; Duke of Burgundy, Lothier, Brabant, Limbourg, Luxembourg, and Guelders ; Count of Flanders and Artois ; Marquis of the Holy Empire ; Seigneur of Friesland, Salins, Malines, the cities, towns, and territory of Utrecht, Overyssel, and Groeningen ; ruler in Asia and in Africa, — declare to you, Henri of France, that by reason of the assaults made upon the city of Douai, and the pillage of the city of Sens, under the order and direction of your governor in Picardy, we consider that the truce sworn by us at Vaucelles has been broken, and we declare war against you by land and sea. In token of this challenge, in the name of my said king, prince, and seigneur, I, Guzman d'Avila, herald of Castile, Leon, Granada, Navarre, and Aragon, here throw down my gauntlet.” And drawing it from his right hand, he threw it with an insolent gesture at the feet of the king.

Then, through his swarthy complexion, Henri II.'s expressive face was seen to turn pale, as, with a voice slightly changed, he said, —

“ Our brother Philip is beforehand with us in addressing to us complaints which we might make against him ; but he would have done better, since he has taken such personal offence, to challenge us personally. We should have been glad to answer for our deeds in single combat, and to let God be judge between us. Tell him, Don Guzman d'Avila, however, that we accept heartily his challenge of war, but that if he should decide to change his mind, and seek a personal encounter, we should accept that challenge with even greater pleasure.”

The constable touched his arm significantly, and he continued : " You may add that you saw our good friend Monsieur de Montmorency, when he heard this proposal we offer you, touch our arm to remind us of a prophecy that we shall die in a duel. Well, at the risk of the fulfilment of this prophecy, we repeat this proposal, which we are doubtful if this prophecy be sufficiently reassuring to our brother to determine him to accept. Monsieur de Montmorency, as Constable of France, I ask you to pick up King Philip's gauntlet."

Then to the herald, " Stay, my friend ! " he said, — bringing forward a bag placed behind him for this purpose, which was filled with gold, — " it is a long distance to Valladolid, and as you came to bring me so welcome news, it is not fair that you should spend upon this long journey your own money or your master's. Therefore take these hundred crowns to defray your expenses."

" Sire," replied the herald, " my master and I live in a country where gold grows, and we have only to stoop and pick it up when we need it." And bowing to the king, he stepped back.

" Ah, ah,— proud as a Castilian !" murmured Henri. " Monsieur de Montgomery, take this bag and distribute the gold through the windows among those outside ! "

Montgomery took the bag, opened the window, and threw the gold to the lackeys in the courtyard below, who received it with exclamations of joy.

" Gentlemen," continued Henri, rising, " it has always been the custom at the court of France to give a fête whenever war has been declared against us by a neighboring sovereign ; there will take place to-night a fête of twofold significance, since we have received at the same time declarations of war from a king and from a queen."

Then turning to the two heralds, who were standing,

one on the left and the other on the right, "Sir William Norry, Don Guzman d'Avila," said the king, "since you bring occasion for the fête, you are invited to take part in it as representatives of Queen Mary our sister, and King Philip our brother."

"Sire," said the constable, in an undertone to King Henri, "will your Majesty hear some news fresh from Picardy, which my nephew sends by a lieutenant of the dauphin's company, Théligny by name ? "

"Ah!" said the king, "bring this officer to me, Cousin ; he will be welcome."

Five minutes later the young man was shown into the king's private cabinet, where he stood, respectfully waiting, until the latter should speak to him.

"Well, Monsieur," demanded the king, "what news do you bring us concerning the admiral's health ? "

"Excellent in that respect, Sire ; indeed, the admiral was never better ! "

"May God preserve his health, and all will go well ! Where did you leave him ? "

"At La Fère, Sire."

"And what intelligence do you bring me from him ? "

"Sire, he desired me to warn your Majesty to prepare for a great war. The enemy has mustered more than fifty thousand men ; and the admiral believes that every movement on the part of the enemy hitherto has been only a manœuvre to conceal his real plans."

"And what has the enemy done up to this time ? " demanded the king.

"The Duke of Savoy, commauder-in-chief," replied the young lieutenant, "accompanied by the Duke of Aer-schott, Count Mansfield, Count Egmont, and the principal officers of his army, has advanced as far as Givet, the general rendezvous of the hostile troops."

"I have learned that from the Duc de Nevers, Governor of Champagne," said the king. "He also added in his despatch that he thought that Emmanuel Philibert chiefly threatened Rocroy or Mézières; and as I was of the opinion that Rocroy, so recently fortified, was not in a condition to sustain a long siege, I requested the Duc de Nevers to determine whether it might not be advisable to abandon that place. Since that time I have heard nothing further from him."

"I can inform your Majesty," said Théligny. "Relying upon the impregnability of the place, Monsieur de Nevers had taken up his position there, and behind the shelter of its walls had given the enemy so hot a reception that after some skirmishes, in which they lost a few hundred men, they were obliged to retreat by the ford of Houssu, between the villages of Nismes and Hauteroche; thence they proceeded to Chimay, Glayon, and Montreuil-aux-Dames; they went next to La Chapelle, which they pillaged, and then to Vervins, which they reduced to ashes; at last they advanced toward Guise, and the admiral does not doubt their intention to besiege that place, where Monsieur de Vassé is in command."

"What troops has the Duke of Savoy?" asked the king.

"Flemish, Spanish, and German troops, Sire,—forty thousand infantry and about fifteen thousand horse."

"And how many men have Monsieur de Châtillon and Monsieur de Nevers at their disposal?"

"Sire, even by uniting their forces they can scarcely command eighteen thousand foot and from five to six thousand horse; besides, Sire, among the latter there are fifteen hundred or two thousand English, who cannot be relied on in case of war with Queen Mary."

"Then, including the garrisons which must be left in

the towns, we can give you scarcely twelve or fourteen thousand men, my dear Constable," said Henri, turning to Montmorency.

"It cannot be helped, Sire! I will do my best with the few you can give me. I have heard it said of a famous general of antiquity, called Xenophon, that he had only ten thousand men in his command when he achieved a magnificent retreat of nearly one hundred and fifty leagues; and that Leonidas, King of Sparta, commanded at the most a thousand men when he held his ground for eight days against the army of Xerxes, which was much more numerous than that of the Duke of Savoy."

"Then you are not discouraged, my good Constable?" said the king.

"Quite the contrary, Sire. *Mordieu!* I was never so happy or full of hope. I only wish that some one could give me information as to the condition of St. Quentin."

"And why is that, Constable?" asked the king.

"Because with the keys of St. Quentin one may open the gates of Paris, Sire: that is an old saying. Do you know the condition of St. Quentin, Monsieur de Théligny?"

"No, Monseigneur; but if I dared — "

"Dare, *mordieu!* dare! the king permits it."

"Well, Monsieur le Connétable, I have with me a sort of squire, provided for me by the admiral, who can give you all the information necessary on the condition of the city, if he wishes."

"What! — if he wishes?" exclaimed the constable.
"He *must* wish."

"Doubtless," said Théligny, "he will not dare refuse to answer the questions of Monsieur le Connétable; but he is a very shrewd fellow, and will answer in his own way."

"His own way?—that is to say, my way, Monsieur le Lieutenant."

"That is the very point on which I wish you not to be deceived, Monseigneur. He will answer in his own way, and not in yours; particularly as you, not being acquainted with St. Quentin, Monseigneur, cannot know whether or not he is telling the truth."

"If he does not tell the truth he shall be hanged."

"Yes, that would be a way of punishing him, but it would not be a way to make use of him. Believe me, Monseigneur, he is a shrewd fellow, clever, and very courageous when he wishes—"

"What!—when he wishes? Is he not then courageous always?" interrupted the constable.

"He is brave, Monseigneur, at all times when it is for his interest to fight. Nothing more can be expected of an adventurer."

"My good Constable," said the king, "whoever seeks an end must use the means at his command. This man may render us a service; Monsieur de Théligny knows him; let him conduct the examination."

"Very well," said the constable; "but let me remind you, Sire, that I have a way of speaking to people—"

"Yes, Monseigneur," replied Théligny, smiling, "we know that manner of yours, and it has its advantages; but in the case of Maître Yvonnet, the only result would be that he would join the enemy on the very first occasion, and would render him the service which he is in a position to render us."

"To the enemy, *mordieu!* To the enemy, *sacrebleu!*" cried the constable. "In that case we will hang him immediately. Is he a scoundrel, a robber, a traitor,—this squire of yours, Monsieur de Théligny?"

"He is simply an adventurer, Monseigneur."

"Oh, oh ! and does my nephew employ such rascals ? "

"We must take things as they are, Monseigneur," replied Thé ligny, laughing. Then turning to the king, he said : "I place my poor Yvonnet under your Majesty's protection, and I demand that whatever he may say or do, I may take him back with me safe and sound as I brought him here."

"You have my promise, Monsieur," said the king. "Go find your squire."

"If your Majesty permits it," replied Thé ligny, "I will simply give a signal, and he will come up."

"Do so."

Thé ligny approached a window which overlooked the park, opened it, and made a signal.

Five minutes later Maître Yvonnet appeared upon the threshold, dressed in the same leather cuirass, the same jerkin of brown velvet, and the same high boots in which he was first presented to our reader. He held in his hand the same hat ornamented with the same plume. But everything looked two years older. A brass chain which once had been gilded hung upon his neck, and glittered upon his breast.

The young man needed but a single glance to see into what presence he had come, and probably recognized either the king or the constable, perhaps both, for he stood respectfully near the door.

"Come in, Yvonnet ; come in, my friend," said the lieutenant ; "his Majesty Henri II. and Monsieur le Connétable desired to see you on account of my report of your merits."

To the constable's great astonishment, Maître Yvonnet did not appear at all surprised that his merits should have deserved such favor.

"I thank you, Lieutenant," said Yvonnet, advancing a

few steps, and then checking himself, under the combined influence of caution and respect ; "my merits, small as they are, are laid at the feet of his Majesty and at the service of Monsieur le Connétable."

The king remarked the young man's clever discrimination between the homage rendered to royal Majesty, and the obedience offered to Monsieur de Montmorency. Doubtless the constable noticed it also.

"Very well," said the latter ; "enough of words, my fine fellow ! Now give me plain answers, or I shall —"

Yvonnet darted a glance at Monsieur de Théligny, as if to say, "Am I incurring danger ? Are they paying me an honor ?"

Théligny, relying on the king's promise, began to question him. "My dear Yvonnet," he said, "the king knows that you are a gallant cavalier, much loved by the ladies, and that you devote to your toilet the profits of your intelligence and courage. Now, as the king wishes to make use of your intelligence immediately, and your courage later, he commissions me to offer you ten gold crowns if you will consent to give him and Monsieur le Connétable some positive information concerning the town of St. Quentin."

"Will the lieutenant be good enough to explain to the king that I am a member of a band of good fellows who have all sworn to turn half the profits gained by each, whether won by intelligence or courage, into the common stock ; so that of the ten gold crowns which are offered me, five only will belong to me, the other five being the property of the society ?"

"And what is to prevent you from keeping the whole ten, you idiot, and saying nothing about your good fortune ?" said the constable.

"My word, Monsieur le Connétable! *Peste!* we are of too low rank to break our word."

"Sire," said the constable, "I have not much confidence in a man who will do things only for money."

Yvonnet bowed before the king. "I ask his Majesty's permission to say two words."

"Ah, now! Why, this rascal — "

"Constable," said the king, "I entreat you — " Then, smiling, he said to Yvonnet, "Speak, my friend!"

The constable shrugged his shoulders, withdrew a few steps, and then began to walk back and forth, as if he disdained to have any share in the conversation.

"Sire," said Yvonnet, with a respect and grace which would have done honor to a finished courtier, "your Majesty will observe that I did not fix any price, either small or great, for services which it is both my duty and pleasure to render as your Majesty's most humble and obedient subject. It was my lieutenant, Monsieur de Théligny, who spoke of ten gold crowns. Your Majesty, of course, could not be aware of my partnership obligations toward eight comrades who also are in the service of Monsieur l'Amiral; therefore I thought it my duty to inform your Majesty that one half of the ten crowns which were to be given me would go to the association. Now that I have explained this to your Majesty, if you wish to question me, I am ready to answer, — and without any question of five, ten, or twenty gold crowns, but simply out of respect, and in obedience and devotion to my king." And the adventurer bowed before Henri with as much dignity as if he had been the ambassador of an Italian prince or a count of the Holy Empire.

"Bravo!" said the king; "you are right, Maître Yvonnet. We will make no bargain in advance, and you will fare the better."

Yvonnet smiled, as if to say, "Oh, I know what I am about!"

But all these little delays irritated the impatient temper of the constable; he came forward and stood before the young man, and stamping with his foot, said, "Come, now that the conditions are arranged, will you tell me what you know about St. Quentin, you rascal?"

Yvonnet looked at the constable, and with that quizzical expression which belongs only to the Parisian, he said: "St. Quentin, Monseigneur? St. Quentin is a town situated upon the banks of the river Somme, six leagues from La Fère, thirteen leagues from Laon, thirty-four leagues from Paris; it has twenty thousand inhabitants, and a city government consisting of twenty-five municipal officers,—namely, a mayor, a vice-mayor, eleven jurymen, and twelve aldermen. These officers themselves elect and create their successors, whom they select from among the citizens, according to a decree of Parliament of Dec. 16, 1335, and a charter of King Charles VI. in 1412."

"Ta, ta, ta, ta, ta!" cried the constable; "what the devil is this bird of ill omen singing to us? I ask you to tell me what you know about St. Quentin, blockhead!"

"Well, I am telling you what I know about St. Quentin, and I can vouch for the correctness of the information; I have it from my friend Maldent, who is a native of Noyon, and who has spent three years at St. Quentin in the capacity of lawyer's clerk."

"Sire," said the constable, "believe me, we shall get nothing out of this clown until he is placed on a wooden horse, with four twelve-pound balls on each leg."

Yvonnet remained impassive.

"I am not quite of your opinion, Constable; I think that we shall gain no information so long as you try to

make him talk, but that he will tell us all we desire to know if we allow Monsieur de Théligny to question him. If he knows what he has told us,— which is just what he would not be likely to know,— you may be sure that he knows something more. Is it not true, Maître Yvonnet, that you have not only made a study of the geography, population, and constitution of the city of St. Quentin, but that you also are aware of the condition of its ramparts, and in what state of preparation its inhabitants are at present ? ”

“ If my lieutenant wishes to question me, or if the king should do me the honor to address to me questions to which he desires answers, I will do my best to satisfy my lieutenant or obey the king.”

“ The scamp is all honey,” murmured the constable.

“ Come, my dear Yvonnet,” said Théligny, “ be so good as to prove to his Majesty that I was not misleading him when I boasted of your intelligence ; explain to him and to Monsieur le Connétable the actual condition of the city’s fortifications.”

Yvonnet shook his head.

“ One would think the rascal knew something about it ! ” muttered the constable.

“ Sire,” replied Yvonnet, not at all disturbed by Monsieur de Montmorency’s observation, “ I have the honor to inform your Majesty that the city of St. Quentin, unaware that it is threatened by any danger, and consequently having prepared no means for defence, is scarcely in a state to resist an attack.”

“ But, at least, it has ramparts ? ” demanded the king.

“ Yes, certainly,” said Yvonnet, — “ ramparts of round and square towers connected by curtains, with two hornworks, one of which guards the Faubourg d’Isle ; but the rampart has not even parapets, and is protected only by

a moat in front. Its upper surface, which rises above the general level of the surrounding country, is overlooked at some points by the neighboring heights, and even by many of the houses situated along the outer moat; and on the right of the road to Guise, between the river Somme and the Isle Gate, the old wall — that is the name of the rampart at this point — is so dilapidated that a man of any agility can easily scale it."

"But, you rogue, if you are an engineer," cried the constable, "say so at once!"

"I am not an engineer, Monsieur le Connétable."

"And what are you, then?"

Yvonnet lowered his eyes with affected modesty.

"Yvonnet is a lover, Monseigneur," said Théligny; "and in order to visit his lady-love, who lives in the Faubourg d'Isle, near the gate of this same faubourg, he has been obliged to study the strong and weak points of the walls."

"Ah, ah," murmured the constable, "that is an explanation!"

"Go on," said the king, "and I will give you a beautiful gold cross to carry to your mistress when you next go to see her."

"And never did gold cross adorn, I am confident, a more beautiful neck than Gudule's, Sire."

"Why, the brute is going to give us a description of his mistress!" said the constable.

"And why not, if she is pretty, Cousin?" said the king, laughing. "You shall have the cross, Yvounet."

"Thanks, Sire."

"And now there is a garrison, at least, in the city of St. Quentin?"

"No, Monsieur le Connétable."

"No!" cried Montmorency; "and how does that happen?"

"Because there are no barracks in the town; and the defence of the city is a right which belongs to the citizens, which right they strictly maintain."

"Citizens! rights! — Sire, believe me, things will always go wrong so long as the citizens, the common people, claim all sorts of rights, which they have received from I don't know whom!"

"From whom? I will tell you, Cousin, — from kings, my predecessors."

"Well, if your Majesty will commission me to take back these rights from the citizens, it shall be quickly done."

"We will attend to that later, my dear Constable; meanwhile our chief concern is with this Spaniard. There ought to be a good garrison at St. Quentin."

"The admiral was occupied with this very matter when I left," said Thé ligny.

"And he must have succeeded by this time," observed Yvonnet, "provided he had the assistance of Maître Jean Pauquet."

"Who is this Maître Jean Pauquet?" asked the king.

"He is Gudule's uncle, Sire," replied Yvonnet, in a tone not quite free from an expression of self-satisfaction.

"What, you rascal!" cried the constable; "you are courting the magistrate's niece?"

"Jean Pauquet is not a magistrate, Monsieur le Connétable."

"And what is this Jean Pauquet of yours?"

"He is syndic of the weavers."

"Jesus!" said the constable, "what sort of times are these, that when the king wishes to garrison one of his cities, he is obliged to negotiate with a syndic of weavers?"

Tell your Jean Pauquet that I will have him hanged if he does not open, not only the gates of the city, but also the doors of his house to the men-at-arms it shall please me to send him."

"I think that Monsieur le Connétable would do well to leave this business to Monsieur de Châtillon," said Yvonnet, shaking his head; "he knows better than Monseigneur the proper way to speak to Jean Pauquet."

"It seems to me that you are getting impertinent!" cried the constable, threateningly.

"Cousin, Cousin," said Henri, "for mercy's sake, let us finish the business we have begun with this brave fellow! You will be able to judge yourself of the truth of his assertions, since the army is under your command, and you are to rejoin it immediately."

"Oh," said the constable, "not later than to-morrow! I must hasten to reduce these bourgeois to reason! A weavers' syndic, *mordieu!* — a fine fellow to negotiate with an admiral! *Peuh!*" And biting his finger-nails, he withdrew into the recess of a window.

"Now," asked the king, "are the approaches to the town easy?"

"On three sides, yes, Sire, — on the sides looking to the Faubourg d'Isle, Rémicourt, and the chapel of Epargnemaille; but on the other side, to one approaching through Tourival, it is necessary to cross the marshes of Grosnard, which are full of pitfalls and quagmires."

The constable had gradually drawn near to listen to these details, which interested him.

"And in case of need," he said, "would you undertake to guide through these marshes a body of troops entering or leaving the city?"

"Certainly; but I have already told Monsieur le Con-

nétable that one of my associates, called Maldent, would be better fitted for this affair, having lived at St. Quentin three years, while I have been there only at night, and have always walked very fast."

"And why so fast?"

"Because when I am alone at night, I am afraid."

"What!" cried the constable, "you are afraid?"

"Certainly, I am afraid."

"And you confess it, you scoundrel?"

"Why not, since it is so?"

"And of what are you afraid?"

"I am afraid of will-o'-the-wisps, ghosts, and phantoms."

The constable burst out laughing. "Ah, you are afraid of will-o'-the-wisps, ghosts, and phantoms?"

"Yes, I am dreadfully nervous." And the young man pretended to shiver.

"Ah, my dear Théligny," continued the constable, "let me compliment you on your squire! That is enough for me; I will not take him for my night messenger."

"It is really better worth while to employ me in the daytime."

"Yes, and let you visit Gudule by night, I suppose?"

"You see, Monsieur le Connétable, that my visits have not been useless, in the opinion of the king, since he has had the kindness to promise me a cross."

"Monsieur le Connétable, be good enough to give this young man forty gold crowns for the valuable information he has afforded us, and the services he promises. You may add ten crowns from me to buy a cross for Mademoiselle Gudule."

The constable shrugged his shoulders. "Forty crowns," he muttered; "forty strokes of the lash! forty blows with a cane! forty blows with the handle of a halberd on the shoulders!"

"You hear me, Cousin ? My word is pledged ; take care that you do not make me break my word."

Then to Thé liegt : "Monsieur le Lieutenant," continued the king, "Monsieur le Connétable will give you orders to take horses from my stables at the Louvre and at Compiègne, that you may travel fast. Do not be afraid of killing them, but try to be at La Fère to-morrow. It is important that Monsieur l'Amiral should know of the declaration of war as soon as possible. Good-by, Monsieur, and good luck to you !"

The lieutenant and his squire respectfully saluted King Henri II., and followed the constable.

Ten minutes later they were galloping along the road to Paris ; and the constable went back to rejoin the king, who was still in his cabinet.

CHAPTER V.

IN CAMP AT LA FÈRE.

HENRI II. awaited the constable, that he might give him on the spot orders of the highest importance.

Monsieur de Montgomery, who had already some years previously conducted French troops to the relief of the regent of Scotland, was sent to Edinburgh to demand that in accordance with a treaty existing between that kingdom and France, the Scots should declare war against England, and that the nobles constituting the Council of Regency should send to France delegates authorized to conclude the marriage between the young Queen Mary and the dauphin.

At the same time a deed was drawn up by which Mary Stuart, with the approbation of the Guises, transferred to the King of France her kingdom of Scotland and the rights which she then possessed, or might yet acquire, to the throne of England,—in case she should die without leaving a male heir. When the marriage should be consummated Mary Stuart would assume the title of “Queen of France, Scotland, and England.” In the mean time the silver service of the young sovereign bore the triple blazon of the Valois, the Stuarts, and the Tudors.

In the evening, as Henri II. had directed, there were magnificent festivities at the Château de St. Germain; and the two heralds on their return — the one to his mis-

tress, the other to his master — could tell them with what exuberant joyousness declarations of war were received at the court of France.

But some time before the first light appeared in the windows of St. Germain, two cavaliers, well mounted, started out from the courtyard of the Louvre, and gaining the barrier of La Villette, followed at a fast trot the road to La Fère. At Louvres they panned a moment to breathe their horses ; at Compiègne they changed horses, according to arrangements previously made ; then, notwithstanding the advanced hour of the night and their need of rest, they resumed their journey, reached Noyon at daybreak, rested there an hour, and then continued on toward La Fère, which place they reached at about eight o'clock in the morning.

Nothing new had happened there since the departure of Théligny and Yvonnet.

Although the latter had made but a brief stay in Paris, he had found time to renew his wardrobe at the shop of an old acquaintance who dealt in second-hand clothes. He had there substituted for his jerkin and brown trunk-hose a doublet and a pair of breeches of green velvet embroidered with gold, and had procured a cherry-colored cap with a white feather. He had also provided himself with boots that were very nearly irreproachable, armed with immense spurs. If these garments were not quite new, they had been worn for so short a time and by so careful an owner that only a very ill-bred person would make remarks upon them, or even recognize them as issuing from the shop of an old-clothes dealer, and not from a tailor's emporium.

As to the chain, after turning the subject over in his mind, Yvonnet had concluded that there was still enough gilding on it to deceive the observer, provided he remained

at a sufficient distance ; and it was his business to keep it from being closely inspected.

We hasten to say that the golden cross had been scrupulously purchased ; but no one ever knew whether or no Yvonnet had scrupulously applied to that purchase the ten crowns given by his Majesty Henri II. to procure that gift for Jean Pauquet's niece. Our own private opinion is that in the clippings of that cross Yvonnet had found means not only to clothe himself with doublet and breeches of green velvet, a cherry-colored cap with a white plume, and boots armed with copper spurs, but also to procure an elegant cuirass, which, placed on the crupper of his horse, gave forth, at every movement of the animal, a slight metallic sound that was quite warlike. But it must be admitted that since all this expenditure was designed to adorn or to defend his person, and since his person belonged to Mademoiselle Gudule, if Yvonnet did indeed thus utilize the clippings of his mistress's cross, it cannot be said that the gift of his Majesty the King of France was diverted from its destination.

Yvonnet had hardly entered La Fère when he had an opportunity to measure the effectiveness of his new toilet. Frantz and Heinrich Scharfenstein were engaged, as purveyors to the band of associates, in conducting to camp an ox of which they had obtained possession. But the animal, actuated by that instinct of conservatism which makes animals averse to scenes of slaughter, refused to go forward ; and Heinrich Scharfenstein was drawing him on by one of his horns, while Frantz pushed him from behind.

On hearing the noise made by the horses' feet on the pavement, Heinrich raised his head, and recognizing our squire, "Oh, Frantz," said he, "just look at Meinherr Yvonnet,— how fine he is ! "

Absorbed in his admiration, Heinrich relaxed his hold on the horn ; and the ox, taking advantage of the opportunity, made a half-turn, and would have set off straight for its stable had not Frantz, stationed, as we have said, near the tail, possessed himself of that member, and by holding back with his herculean strength arrested the course of the fugitive animal.

Yvonnet made with his hand a patronizing gesture of salutation, and passed on.

On arriving at the residence of the admiral, the young lieutenant announced himself, and was immediately admitted to the admiral's cabinet, followed by Yvonnet, who with his usual tact, and notwithstanding his changed condition, waited respectfully at the door.

Monsieur de Châtillon, bending over one of those uncompleted maps which were made at that epoch, was endeavoring to complete it from information given him by a man of good appearance, with a sharp nose and intelligent eye, who was standing before him. This was our friend Maldent, who, as Yvonnet had said, having been a lawyer's clerk three years at St. Quentin, was well acquainted with the city and the surrounding country.

The admiral, hearing the noise made by Théligny in entering, looked up and recognized his messenger. Maldent quietly turned his eyes toward the door, and recognized Yvonnet. The admiral extended his hand to Théligny. Maldent exchanged a glance with Yvnett, who showed on the edge of his pocket the strings of a purse, by way of informing his associate that his journey had not been without gain.

Théligny briefly gave the admiral an account of his interview with the king and the constable, and delivered to the Governor of Picardy his uncle's letters.

"Yes," said Coligny, as he read, "I have thought, with

him, that St. Quentin is indeed an important point to be protected. And therefore, my dear Théligny, your company went thither yesterday. You will rejoin it this very day, and announce that I shall come immediately." And quite preoccupied by the information which Maldent was giving him, he bent again over the map and continued his annotations.

Théligny was well aware that the grave and profound mind of the admiral must be left free to follow its own course ; and since, in all probability, when his notes were completed Coligny would have further orders to give him in regard to St. Quentin, the lieutenant, approaching Yvonnet, said to him in a low tone,—

" Go and wait for me at the camp. I will take you up as I pass, after I have received the admiral's last instructions."

Yvonnet bowed silently, and withdrew. He found his horse at the door, and in a few moments was outside the town.

The admiral's camp, located at first at Pierrepont, near Marle, had been moved to the neighborhood of La Fère. Too weak to keep to the open country with the fifteen to eighteen hundred men in his command, the admiral, fearing a surprise, had sought the shelter of a fortified post, considering the advantage to his small force of being behind good walls.

Yvonnet, crossing the outer limit of the camp, stood up in his stirrups, seeking to recognize some one of his companions, and to discover in what part of the camp they had their quarters. Very soon his gaze was arrested by a group, in the middle of which he thought he saw Procope sitting on a rock, and writing.

Procope was putting to use his clerical knowledge. At the moment when an encounter with the enemy

might be expected, he was drawing wills at five sous each. Yvonnet understood that he must not be interrupted in that serious occupation. He again looked around him, and perceived Heinrich and Frantz Scharfenstein, who had abandoned their efforts to lead the ox to camp, and having tied his legs, were carrying him thither suspended from a carriage-pole, one end of which each of them supported on his shoulder. A man, who proved to be no other than Pilletrousse, was making signs to them from the door of a tent which seemed to be in fair condition.

Yvonnet was ready to avail himself of his rights of domicile, and immediately approached Pilletrousse, who, instead of offering a greeting to his old companion, took a turn around him, then a second turn, and then a third. Yvonnet, like the horseman in an equestrian statue, looked at him with a smile of satisfaction while he made these perambulations.

Having made the third circuit, Pilletrousse paused, and with a click of the tongue, which meant admiration, "*Peste !*" said he, "that is a fine horse,— well worth forty crowns. Where the devil did you steal it?"

"Hush!" said Yvonnet, "speak of the animal with respect; it comes from his Majesty's stables, and is in my possession only by way of loan."

"That is a pity!" said Pilletrousse.

"Why?"

"Because I have a purchaser."

"Ah!" said Yvonnet; "and who is your purchaser?"

"I," said a man standing behind him.

Yvonnet turned, and threw a quick glance at the man who announced himself with that proud monosyllable, which a hundred years later made the success of the tragedy of "Medea."

The admirer of the horse was a young man twenty-three or twenty-four years old, only partially armed, according to the custom of soldiers when in camp.

Yvonnet needed only to observe those square shoulders, that head with flowing hair and a red beard, those blue eyes full of determination and ferocity, to recognize the man who had addressed him.

"Monsieur," said he, "you have heard my answer. The horse belongs to his Majesty the King of France, who had the goodness to lend it to me for my return to camp. If he reclaims it, I must restore it to him; if he leaves it with me, it is at your service,—its price, you understand, being agreed upon between us in advance."

"That is what I mean," the gentleman replied. "Keep it, then, for me; I am rich and generous."

Yvonnet bowed.

"Moreover," the gentleman continued, "this is not the only matter in which I expect to have to do with you."

Yvonnet and Pilletrousse bowed together.

"How many are there in your band?"

"In our troop, you mean, Monsieur?" replied Yvonnet, a little hurt by the term employed.

"In your troop, if that suits you better."

"If during my absence no accident has happened to any one of my comrades," replied Yvonnet, with a questioning glance at Pilletrousse, "there are nine of us."

A look from Pilletrousse reassured Yvonnet, if indeed he was anxious on the subject.

"Nine brave men?" the gentleman asked.

Yvonnet smiled; Pilletrousse shrugged his shoulders.

"Indeed, you have there some promising specimens," said the gentleman, pointing to Frantz and Heinrich, "if those two brave fellows belong to your troop."

"They belong to it!" replied Pilletrousse, laconically.

"Very well, I can negotiate —"

"Pardon," said Yvonnet, "but we belong to the admiral!"

"Except for two days in the week, when we can work on our own account," remarked Pilletrousse. "Procope inserted that clause in the agreement to provide for these two cases,—first, when we may have some enterprise of our own to put into execution, and, secondly, when some honorable gentleman makes a proposition to us of the kind which Monsieur seems now to have in mind."

"It is only for a single day or for a single night; so that falls out marvellously well. Now, in case of need, where shall I find you?"

"At St. Quentin, probably," said Yvonnet. "As for myself, I am to be there this very day."

"And two of our number," continued Pilletrousse, "Lactance and Malemort, are there already. As for the remainder of the troop —"

"As for the remainder of the troop," Yvonnet interrupted, "they will not be slow to follow us, since the admiral, after what I have heard him say, is to be there himself in two or three days."

"Very well," said the gentleman. "So, then, we shall meet at St. Quentin, my brave fellows!"

"At St. Quentin, Monsieur."

The gentleman made a slight bow, and withdrew. Yvonnet continued looking at him until he was lost in the crowd; then calling a camp-boy, who served the nine associates, and who in exchange for his services received from the association temporal and spiritual nurture, he threw his horse's bridle over the boy's arm.

Yvonnet's first impulse had been to approach Pilletrousse, and impart to him his recollections concerning

the stranger ; but reflecting, probably, that Pilletrousse was of too coarse calibre to be intrusted with a secret of such importance, he swallowed the words that were on the tip of his tongue, and appeared to give all his attention to the labors of Heinrich and Frantz Scharfenstein.

Heinrich and Frantz having, as we have said, by suspending their recalcitrant ox from a carriage-pole transported him to the middle of the camp, had deposited him, breathing hard and with bloodshot eyes, opposite their tent. Heinrich went into his tent to get his war-hammer, and had some difficulty in finding it ; for Fracasso, seized with a poetic inspiration, had stretched himself upon a mattress, that he might dream more at ease, and had made use of the hammer as a pillow to support his head.

This hammer was simple in form and of common material, — a twelve-pound cannon-ball attached to an iron handle ; it was, together with an immense two-handed sword, the customary weapon of the two Scharfensteins. Heinrich found it at last ; and in spite of Fracasso's complaints, whom he interrupted in the very fire of composition, he drew it from under the poet's head, and returned to Frantz, who was waiting for him.

As soon as Frantz freed the forelegs of the ox, the animal made a sudden effort and partly rose from his recumbent posture. Heinrich took advantage of that moment ; he raised the iron hammer until, as it descended behind him, it touched his loins, and then with all his force he struck the ox between the horns.

The animal, who had begun to utter a moan, ceased at once, and fell as if struck by lightning.

Pilletrousse, who with eager eye, and in an attitude like that of a pointer making a stand, was awaiting this

moment, threw himself upon the prostrate animal, and opened an artery in his neck. He then split the body from the lower lip to the opposite extremity, and applied himself to the task of dissecting it.

Pilletrousse was the butcher of the association. Heinrich and Frantz, the purveyors, bought and killed the animal, as they had done in the present instance; then Pilletrousse took off the hide, cut up the body, set aside for the association the choice bits, and in a sort of stall, set up at a short distance from the partnership tent, he exposed for sale, arranged with all the skill at his command, the several portions which he had no wish to keep. And he was so skilful a carver and so adroit a seller that after setting apart enough to last the association two or three days, he generally gained from the sale of three quarters of the animal one or two crowns more than it had cost.

All this was to the advantage of the association, which, as may be seen, was likely to be quite prosperous if its affairs were prosecuted by every one of its members as they had been by those who have come under our observation.

The carving of the body had been completed, and the auction sale was in progress, when a cavalier appeared in the midst of those who thronged around the stall of Maître Pilletrousse, and who — each according to his means — were purchasing all the parts of the animal that were offered for sale.

That cavalier was Thé ligny, who, provided with letters from the admiral to the mayor, to the governor of the city, and to Jean Pauquet, syndic of the weavers, was looking for his squire, Yvonnet. He also brought the news that as soon as the admiral had procured the troops for which he was waiting, and had communicated with

his uncle the constable, he would set out for St. Quentin, accompanied by five or six hundred men.

Maldent, Procope, Fracasso, Pilletrousse, and the two Scharfensteins would form a part of the garrison, and would rejoin in the city Malemort and Lactance, who were there already, and Yvonnet, who, with Monsieur de Théligny, would be there in two or three hours.

The farewells were brief; for Fracasso had not yet finished his sonnet, and was seeking in vain a rhyme for the word *perdre*; and the two Scharfensteins, though fond of Yvonnet, were naturally undemonstrative; and finally, Pilletrousse was so much occupied with his sale that he could only say to the young man, as he pressed his hand,—

“ Try to keep the horse.”

CHAPTER VI.

ST. QUENTIN.

As Yvonnet had told the constable, St. Quentin was six leagues from La Fère. The horses had already travelled a long distance since the night before, without any stop except for an hour at Noyon. They had just rested two hours, it is true; nevertheless, as there was no reason for haste, except perhaps Yvonnet's desire to see Gudule, the cavaliers occupied nearly three hours in making the six remaining leagues of their journey.

At last, after passing the outer wall, and leaving on the right the road to Guise, which branches off about one hundred steps from the old wall, after giving their names at the gate, and passing under the archway made in the rampart, the two cavaliers arrived in the Faubourg d'Isle.

"Will my lieutenant give me leave of absence for about ten minutes?" asked Yvonnet, "or is he willing, by a slight change of course, to get news of what is taking place in the city?"

"Ah, ah!" said Théligny, laughing, "you must be in the neighborhood of Mademoiselle Gudule's place of residence?"

"Exactly so, Lieutenant," said Yvonnet.

"Is it not imprudent?" asked Théligny.

"Not in the least! I pass in the daytime for a mere acquaintance of Mademoiselle Gudule, who exchanges with her a friendly salutation. It has always been my

principle not to injure the marriage prospects of pretty girls."

And turning to the right, he proceeded down a narrow street, on one side of which was a high garden-wall, and on the other a row of houses, one window of which was half hidden by nasturtium and convolvulus vines. By rising in his stirrups, Yvonnet could just reach up to this window, under which was a stepping-stone, affording to pedestrians, in case of love or business affairs, the same facility which was possessed by Yvonnet on horseback.

Just as he arrived, the window opened as if by magic, and a charming little face, blushing with joy, appeared in the midst of the flowers.

"Ah, it is you, Gudule!" said Yvonnet. "How did you divine my arrival?"

"I did not divine it. I was at my other window, which overlooks the road to La Fère, and saw two cavaliers approaching; and although I had no reason to think that you were one of them, I could n't take my eyes off those two travellers. As you came nearer, I recognized you. Then I ran to this window, trembling with fear; for I feared that you would pass without stopping,—partly because you were not alone, and partly because you are so grandly and beautifully dressed that I feared you had made your fortune."

"The person whom I have the honor to accompany, my dear Gudule, and who has allowed me this short interview with you, is Monsieur de Théligny, my lieutenant, who has, as well as I, some questions to ask you concerning the condition of the city."

Gudule cast a timid glance at the lieutenant, who saluted her with a polite bow, to which the young girl replied by a "God preserve you, Monsieur!" spoken in an agitated tone.

"As to my change of costume, Gudule," continued Yvonnet, "I owe it to the liberality of the king, who, knowing that I had the pleasure of your acquaintance, also commissioned me to deliver you this gold cross." And Yvonnet drew the cross from his pocket and offered it to Gudule, who, while hesitating to take it, exclaimed :

"What are you saying, Yvonnet ? Why do you make fun of a poor girl ?"

"I am not laughing at you, Gudule," replied Yvonnet ; "and my lieutenant will witness to the truth of what I say."

"Indeed, my pretty maid," said Théligny, "I was present when the king commissioned Yvonnet to bring you this gift."

"You know the king, then ?" asked Gudule, in wonder.

"Since yesterday, Gudule ; and since yesterday also the king knows about you and your brave uncle Jean Pauquet, to whom my lieutenant brings a letter from Monsieur l'Amiral."

The lieutenant nodded assent ; and Gudule, who, as we have said, had hesitated at first, reached out through the flowers her trembling hand, which Yvonnet grasped and kissed while placing in it the cross.

Then Théligny, approaching, said, "And now, my dear Monsieur Yvonnet, will you ask the pretty Gudule where we shall find her uncle, and what he is disposed to do in this emergency ?"

"My uncle is at the town-house, Monsieur," said the young girl, unable to withdraw her eyes from the cross, "and I think is determined to make a good defence of the city."

"Thank you, my pretty girl ! Come, Yvonnet — "

Gudule, assuming a questioning look, and blushing up

to her very eyes, said, addressing Théligny, "What if my father should ask me who gave me this cross?"

"You can tell him that his Majesty sent it to you," replied the young officer, smiling, who understood Gudule's apprehension,—"that the king gave it to you in recognition of services already rendered him, and of those which doubtless will yet be rendered him by your Uncle Jean and your father Guillaume. In short, if you do not wish to mention Maître Yvonnet,—which is possible,—you may add that it was Monsieur de Théligny, lieutenant in the dauphin's company, who brought you this cross from the king."

"Oh, thanks, thanks!" cried Gudule, clapping her hands together in delight; "without having that explanation, I never should have dared to wear it."

Then she whispered hurriedly to Yvonnet, "When shall I see you again?"

"When I was three or four leagues away from you, Gudule, you saw me every night," replied Yvonnet; "just think, now that I am living in the same city—"

"Hush!" said Gudule. Then in a still lower whisper, "Come soon," she said; "I think that my father will spend the night at the town-house." And she drew in her head behind the curtain of leaves and flowers.

The young men followed the road between the Somme and the fountain Ferrée. Midway on this road they passed on their left the abbey and church of St. Quentin-en-Isle, and crossed a bridge which led them to the chapel where the relics of the holy martyr were preserved; a second bridge, which brought them to the pass of St. Peter; and, lastly, a third, after crossing which they found themselves opposite the two towers that flanked the Porte d'Isle.

The gate was guarded by a soldier of Théligny's regiment and by a citizen of the town.

This time there was no need for Théligny to give his name ; indeed the soldier came to him to ask for news. It was reported that the enemy was near ; and this little band of five hundred men, under command of a second lieutenant, felt somewhat isolated among all these citizens who in their alarm were running about the city, or who idled away their time in meetings at the town-house, where they talked much and did little.

St. Quentin appeared to be abandoned to the most fearful confusion. The main thoroughfare — which divides the city through two thirds of its length, and into which lead, as streams empty into a river, the streets Wager, Cordeliers, Issenghien, Ligniers on the right, and on the left the streets Corbeaux, Truie-qui-file, and Brebis — was thronged with people ; and this multitude, denser still in the Rue Sellerie, presented upon the public square a wall so compact that it was almost impossible even for the horsemen to pass through it.

It is true that when Yvonnet set his hat on the point of his sword, and rising in his stirrups called out, " Make way ! Make way for the messengers of Monsieur l'Amiral !" the crowd, hoping that it was the announcement of reinforcements, fell back upon itself sufficiently to open for the two cavaliers a path, which, starting from the church of St. Jacques, led them to the steps of the town-house, where the mayor, Messire Varlet de Gibercourt, awaited them.

The two cavaliers had arrived at an opportune moment ; there had been a meeting of the citizens, and thanks to their patriotism, excited to a higher pitch by the eloquence of Maitre Jean Pauquet and his brother Guillaume, it had been unanimously decided that the city of St. Quentin,

loyal to its king and relying on its patron saint, would defend itself to the last extremity.

The news which Théligny brought of the speedy approach of the admiral with reinforcements carried their enthusiasm to its greatest height. Then and there the citizens organized themselves into companies. Each company was to consist of fifty men, and to elect its own officers.

The mayor opened the arsenal of the town-hall. Unfortunately, it was poorly stocked,—containing only fifteen cannon of different kinds, some of which were in a very bad condition, and thirty-six arquebuses; but there were halberds and pikes in abundance.

Jean Pauquet was made captain of one of these companies, and Guillaume Pauquet, his brother, lieutenant of another. Honors were pouring in upon the family; but these honors were fraught with danger.

The total muster of troops, therefore, comprised one hundred and twenty or one hundred and thirty men belonging to the dauphin's company, commanded by Théligny; nearly one hundred men of the company of Monsieur de Breuil, Governor of St. Quentin, who had arrived eight days before from Abbeville; and two hundred citizens organized into four companies of fifty men each. Three of these companies were composed of men armed with crossbows, pikes, and halberds; the fourth was armed with arquebuses.

Suddenly a fifth company was seen approaching, which, on account of its unexpected appearance and the elements of which it was composed, was greeted with enthusiasm.

It emerged from the Rue Croix-Belle-Porte, and consisted of one hundred Jacobin friars, all bearing pikes or halberds, led by a man under whose robe might be seen

the links of a breastplate, and who carried in his hand a drawn sword.

Attracted by the shouts of the spectators, Yvonnet turned and looked ; observing the captain attentively, he exclaimed, " May the devil burn me if it is not Lactance ! "

It was indeed Lactance. Suspecting that the campaign would be a severe one, he had retired into the Jacobin monastery in the Rue des Rosiers to do there his penance and bring himself as far as was possible into a state of grace. The good fathers had received him with open arms ; and Lactance, while confessing and receiving the sacrament, had observed the patriotism which animated them, and considered whether it could not be utilized. Consequently he communicated to the monks, as an inspiration from heaven, the idea which had occurred to him of organizing them into a military company for the defence of St. Quentin. To this they agreed. Lactance had obtained from the prior permission to take one hour from matins and a half hour from vespers for practice, and at the end of three days considering them sufficiently skilful in military tactics, he had taken them from the convent, and, as we have said, had brought them into the public square amid the loud acclamations of the multitude.

St. Quentin could therefore rely, for the time being, upon one hundred men belonging to the dauphin's company, one hundred men of the company commanded by the governor of the city, two hundred citizen-soldiers, and one hundred Jacobin monks, — in all, five hundred combatants.

Scarcely had the mayor, the governor of the city, and the other magistrates mustered their men, when loud cries arose from the ramparts, and people were seen run-

ning through the streets of Orféverie and St. André, lifting their hands to heaven as if in despair.

To all questions their answer was that they had seen a crowd of peasants flying across the plain between Homblières and Mesnil-St.-Laurent, trampling down the corn and giving unmistakable signs of terror.

Immediately orders were given to close the gates and man the ramparts.

Lactance, who in the midst of danger preserved the calmness of a true Christian, ordered his Jacobins to harness themselves to the cannon, to place eight of them upon the wall which extends from the Isle Gate to the Damense Tower, two upon the wall of the Vieux-Marché, three between the high tower and the postern of the little bridge, and two upon the old wall in the Faubourg d'Isle.

Théligny and Yvonnet, who were on horseback, and who were satisfied that in spite of their long journey since the evening before, their horses were still in good condition, rode out through the Ramicourt Gate, forded the river, and galloped off over the plain to discover, if possible, the cause of the flight of this multitude of people.

The first individual whom they saw approaching was using his right hand to keep in place as well as possible his nose and cheek, while with the other he was making vigorous signs to Yvonnet.

Yvonnet turned in his direction and recognized Malemort.

"Ah!" shouted the latter, with all the strength of his lungs, "to arms! to arms!"

Yvonnet redoubled his speed, and seeing his associate dripping with blood, leaped to the ground and examined his wound. It was a terrible wound, which would have

fearfully marred an unscarred face ; but in Malemort's case it would only have the effect of adding one more scar to a face already seamed in every direction.

Yvonnet folded his handkerchief in four thicknesses, made an opening in the middle for Malemort's nose ; then laying the wounded man upon the ground and placing his head on his knee, he bandaged the wounded face as easily and dexterously as the most skilful surgeon could have done it.

Meantime the wounded man was informing Théligny of what had taken place. That morning the enemy had appeared in sight of Origny-Ste.-Benoîte. Malemort happened to be there, having with his usual instinct foreseen that that would be the first point of attack, and had incited the citizens to defend themselves. Consequently they had withdrawn into the château with all the arms and ammunition they could collect. There they held their ground for about four hours. But attacked by the whole Spanish vanguard, the château had been carried by assault. Malemort had done wonders in the combat, but had been obliged to retreat. Pressed close by four Spaniards, he had turned upon them, and had killed two of them ; but just as he was attacking the third, the fourth had with a back-handed blow cut a terrible gash in his face just below the eyes. Then Malemort, perceiving the impossibility of defending himself, blinded as he was by such a wound, had fallen over backward with a loud cry, as if he had been killed by the blow. The Spaniards had searched him, taken from him the three or four sous which he possessed, and had gone to rejoin their companions, who were engaged in a pillage which was more profitable. Then Malemort got up, held his nose and cheek in their proper place as well as he could with his hand, and started for the city to give the

alarm. This accounts for the fact that Malemort, who was ordinarily the foremost in attack and the last in retreat, now happened to be, contrary to his usual practice, leading the fugitives.

Thé ligny and Yvonnet had obtained the intelligence they rode out to seek. Yvonnet took Malemort up behind him, and all three returned to St. Quentin, crying, "To arms!"

The entire city was waiting for their return. In a moment it was known that the enemy was only four or five leagues away; but the enthusiasm of the citizens was so great that this news increased their courage instead of diminishing it.

Fortunately, among the hundred men of Monsieur de Breuil, there were forty gunners; among whom the fifteen pieces which the Jacobin friars had drawn to the ramparts were distributed. Three gunners were needed for each piece; the monks offered to complete the number, and their offer was accepted. After an hour's practice they were as proficient as the regular gunners. And they were just in time, for in about an hour the first of the Spanish columns came in sight.

The city council determined to send a messenger to the admiral to inform him of the situation; but no one was willing to leave the city in the hour of danger.

Yvonnet suggested Malemort.

Malemort was loud in his objections; since his wounds had been dressed he felt, he said, much better than he had for a long time; it was fifteen months since he had had an opportunity to fight; his blood was stifling him, and it had been a great relief to lose a little of it.

But Yvonnet pointed out to him that a horse would be furnished him, which he could keep; that in three or four days he would return to the city in the train of

Monsieur l'Amiral, and that, having a horse, he could in the case of sallies go much farther than the men on foot.

This last consideration decided Malemort. Besides, Yvonnet possessed that influence over Malemort which nervous, delicate natures always exercise over powerful ones.

Malemort mounted his horse and galloped off in the direction of La Fère ; and judging from the speed to which the adventurer urged his horse, there was no danger but that in an hour and a half the admiral would be informed.

Meanwhile the gates had been opened to admit the poor fugitives from Origny-Ste.-Benoîte, and every one in the city had been eager to offer them hospitality. Messengers were then despatched to the surrounding villages — Harly, Rémicourt, La Chapelle, Rocourt, L'Abbiette — to bring in all the flour and grain they could find.

The enemy advanced in a phalanx, whose length and depth went to show that it might comprise the whole Spanish, German, and Walloon army, — that is to say, an army of fifty or sixty thousand men.

Just as when the lava flows down from the crater of Vesuvius or Ætna the houses burn and the trees take fire, even before the torrent of flame reaches them, so could be seen in front of the black line of this advancing host blazing houses and the village trees catching fire.

The whole city watched this spectacle from the top of the ramparts of Rémicourt, from the galleries of the Collegiate Church, which overlooks the city, and from the summit of the Tour St. Jean, the Tour Rouge, and the Tour à l'Eau ; and at every fresh breaking out of fire a volley of imprecations arose which might be likened

to a flock of birds of ill-omen spreading their wings before pouncing upon their prey.

But the enemy's troops advanced steadily, driving the population before them as the wind blew the smoke of the fires. For some time the gates of the city had been kept open to admit the fugitives ; but soon it became necessary to close them, the enemy had approached so near. Then the poor peasants of the burning villages were obliged to pass around the city, and seek refuge in Vermand, Pontru, and Caulaincourt.

Soon the drum beat the signal for all non-combatants to leave the ramparts and the towers. At last there remained upon the whole line of ramparts only the defenders, silent, as men usually are at the approach of danger.

The vanguard could now be distinctly seen. It was composed of soldiers armed with pistols, who, having crossed the Somme between Rouvroy and Harly, spread themselves about round the outside of the city, occupying the approaches to the gates of Rémicourt, St. Jean, and Ponthoille.

Behind the pistol-bearers, three or four thousand men, who by the regularity of their step could be recognized as belonging to those old Spanish bands who were considered the best troops in the world, crossed the Somme in their turn, and took the direction of the Faubourg d'Isle.

"Taking everything into account, my dear Yvonnet," said Théligny, "I have reason to believe that it is in the direction of your lady-love's house that the music will begin. If you would like to see how the air is played, come with me."

"Most willingly, Lieutenant !" said Yvonnet, already feeling through his whole body those nervous tremblings

which always preceded the approach of battle. And with lips pressed tight, and cheeks somewhat pale, he followed Théligny in the direction of the Porte d'Isle, toward which the latter led nearly half of his men, leaving the rest to support the citizen-soldiers, and if need be set them an example. We shall see, later, that it was the citizens who set the example to the regular troops, instead of receiving it from them.

The detachment arrived at the Faubourg d'Isle. Yvonnet preceded the company a hundred steps, which gave him time to knock at Gudule's window, who ran to it trembling, and to advise the young girl to descend into the lower rooms, since in all probability the cannon-balls would play skittles with the chimneys of the houses.

He had hardly finished when, as if to emphasize his words, a cannon-shot whistled by and demolished the gable of a house, the splinters of which fell like a shower of meteors around the young man.

Yvonnet sprang from the street to the top of the stepping-stone, clung to the sill of the window, and in the midst of the flowers pressed his lips to the trembling lips of the young girl in a very tender kiss, and dropping back into the street, said, "If anything should happen to me, Gudule, do not forget me too quickly; and when you do forget me, let it not be for a Spaniard, German, or Englishman."

And without waiting to hear the young girl's protestations of everlasting love, he made his way toward the old wall, and arrived behind the parapet at a point a few steps from the place which he was accustomed to scale in his nocturnal wanderings.

It was indeed in this place that the music had begun, as had been foreseen by Théligny, who arrived on the scene immediately after his squire. The music was

noisy, and more than once those who listened to it ducked their heads in fear ; but gradually the citizens, who at first were laughed at by the soldiers, became accustomed to the danger, and then they were more furious than the others.

But the Spaniards rushed on in such numbers that the citizens were obliged to abandon the outer rampart, which they had first attempted to defend, but which, without parapet, and overlooked on all sides by superior heights, was not tenable. Protected by the two pieces of cannon, and by the arquebusiers on the old wall, they made their retreat in good order, leaving three men killed, but carrying away their wounded.

Yvonnet was dragging a Spaniard through whose body he had thrust his slender blade, and whose arquebuse he had taken ; as he had not had an opportunity to relieve him also of the cartridge-case suspended to his belt, he took the dead man along with him, hoping also that his trouble would not be lost, and that the pockets would prove to be as well filled as the belt.

This confidence was rewarded ; besides their three months' wages, which had been paid to the Spaniards the evening before to stimulate their zeal, each one had stolen a little during the five or six days of the campaign. We could not say whether Yvonnet's Spaniard had stolen more or less than the others ; but on going through his pockets Yvonnet seemed very well satisfied with what he had found.

As soon as Thé ligny's soldiers and the armed citizens had left the outer rampart, it was taken possession of by the two Spanish chiefs, Julian Romero and Carondelet, who seized upon all the houses situated on the road to Guise, as well as on that to La Fère, throughout what was called the upper faubourg ; but when they attempted

to cross the intervening space between the outer boulevard and the old wall, they were met by a fire so well sustained that they were obliged to fall back to the houses, from whose windows they continued to fire until the increasing darkness put an end to the combat.

Not until this time had Yvonnet felt free to look about him. As he did so, scarcely ten steps behind him, almost on the edge of the rampart, he saw the pale face of a charming young girl, who, under the pretext of looking for her father, and in spite of the warning to non-combatants, had ventured upon the scene of conflict. Yvonnet glanced from the young girl to the lieutenant.

"My dear Monsieur Yvonnet," said the latter to him, "you have been keeping the field now for two days and nights, and must be weary; leave to others the duty of watching upon the ramparts, and rest yourself until tomorrow. You will find me then wherever the battle is raging."

Yvonnet did not wait for a second command; he saluted his lieutenant, cast a side glance at Gudule, and without seeming to notice the young girl he set out along the road as if to enter the city. But, doubtless on account of the darkness, he wandered off into the faubourg; and ten minutes later he made his appearance in that little street, opposite that little window, with a foot upon that stepping-stone from the top of which so many things could be accomplished.

Yvonnet made use of it to grasp two little white hands which immediately emerged from this window, and drew him so quickly and dexterously into the interior of the apartment that it was easy to see that they were not unaccustomed to this practice.

The foregoing events took place August 2, 1557.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ADMIRAL KEEPS HIS PROMISE.

As might have been expected, Malemort quickly made the six leagues between St. Quentin and La Fère, and in less than an hour and a half was at the admiral's door.

In this man who rode up at a mad gallop, his clothes covered with blood, his face — with the exception of eyes and mouth — concealed under the linen bandage, it was impossible to recognize Malemort ; but it was easy to see that he was the bearer of important tidings. He was therefore immediately shown into the presence of Coligny. The admiral was with his uncle the constable, who had just arrived.

Malemort gave an account of the taking of Origny-Ste.-Benoîte, the massacre of those who attempted to defend the château, and the burning of the villages along the route followed by the Spanish army, which left behind it a wake of flame and smoke.

The lines of action to be followed by the uncle and the nephew were immediately marked out. Coligny, with five or six hundred men, was to set out immediately for St. Quentin and defend it to the last extremity. The constable, with the remainder of the soldiers present in camp, would rejoin the army of the Duc de Nevers, who, having only eight or nine thousand men, and being consequently too weak to attack the Spanish army, which numbered more than fifty thousand men, was watching it closely and held himself in readiness to profit by its mistakes. This

little band was performing its manœuvres on the borders of the Lyonese and La Thiérache.

The admiral at once gave orders to sound “Boots and saddles!” and to beat the signal for departure. On Maldent’s advice, whom he took for a guide, the admiral decided to follow the road to Ham, instead of the direct road. From the information received, he calculated that the Spaniards would attack St. Quentin on the sides toward Rémicourt, the Faubourg St. Jean, and the Faubourg d’Isle. Consequently on those three sides Coligny would meet with hindrance in his attempt to enter the city. According to Maldent, the only road which they were likely to find open was that leading from Ham to St. Quentin, which ran through marshes almost impassable except for those who were acquainted with the paths.

The admiral took with him the companies of infantry commanded severally by Captains Saint-André, Rambouillet, and Louis Poy.

But the company of Louis Poy having arrived from Gascony on that very day, the men were so fatigued that they were obliged to come to a halt on the way from La Fère to Ham. Just as the constable and admiral were leaving La Fère, the constable accompanying the admiral a short distance on his way to Ham, they met in the middle of the road, sitting upon his haunches and stopping their progress, a big black dog which began to howl with all its might. The dog was driven away; but after running on a hundred steps, he seated himself again in the middle of the road and howled more dismally than before. Driven away again, he for the third time played the same trick, each time howling louder and more desperately.

Then the constable, turning to Monsieur de Coligny, said, “What the devil do you think this is, Nephew?”

“Why,” replied the admiral, “I think that it is very

disagreeable music, Monsieur, and that we are about to furnish the comedy for it."

"Yes, and perhaps the tragedy also," replied the constable.

Upon this, the uncle and nephew embraced, and the admiral continued on his way to Ham; the constable returning to La Fère, which place he left again that very evening.

But on his departure from the city, another presage awaited him. Scarcely was he a league away on his road to Laon when a sort of pilgrim, wearing a long robe and having a long beard, seized the bridle of his horse, crying, "Montmorency! Montmorency! I declare to you that in three days all your glory will be in ashes!"

"Be it so," said the constable; "but I declare to you that in much less time your jaw-bone will be in pieces." And he gave him such a blow with the fist that the poor prophet fell fainting to the ground, with his jaw-bone dislocated.

The constable continued on his way as the admiral had done, each of them having met his evil omen.

The admiral arrived at Ham about five o'clock in the evening. His determination was to pursue his journey without stopping until he should reach St. Quentin. Consequently, after the soldiers had taken an hour's rest, he resumed his march with his mounted men-at-arms and two companies of infantry only.

At Ham Messieurs Jarnac and Luzarches made every effort to retain him, pointing out to him the service he might render in the open country, and offering to go to St. Quentin in his place; but the admiral had answered, "I would rather lose all that I have than fail to carry to these brave people, so eager to defend their city, the aid I have promised them!" And, as we have said, he set

out without a moment's delay, at the hour he had named.

At the gates of Ham he met the Abbé de St. Prix. This was a most noble prelate, named Jacques de La Motte ; he was canon at once of St. Quentin, Chartres, Paris, and Le Mans ; he held, besides, two priories, and when he died he had served as canon under five kings, François I. being the first.

Coligny, thinking that the illustrious traveller had just come from St. Quentin, approached him ; soldier and churchman made themselves known to each other.

The abbé, as soon as the first cannon-shot was fired at the Porte d'Isle, had left the city by the Faubourg de Ponthoille, and was going with all speed to inform the king of the situation of St. Quentin and to demand his aid. Thus, as the admiral had foreseen, the only road open was the one he had taken.

"Monsieur l'Abbé," said the admiral to the prelate, "since you are going to see the king, be so kind as to tell his Majesty that you met me at the head of a good company, and hoping with the aid of God to enter St. Quentin to-night, where I hope to do good service." And saluting the abbé, he went on his way.

A league farther on he began to see the fugitives from Origny-Ste.-Benoîte and the other villages in the neighborhood of St. Quentin, who, unable to find refuge in the city, had been obliged to seek it elsewhere. The unfortunate fugitives were worn out with fatigue,—some still dragging themselves along, others lying under the shade of trees and perishing with hunger and weariness. The admiral bestowed on them what help he could, and continued his journey.

About two leagues from St. Quentin night overtook them ; but Malemort was there, and he made himself re-

sponsible for the safety of all who should follow him. In the hope of large reward at the end of the journey, he offered, as proof of his good faith, to walk before the admiral's horse with a rope about his neck.

Captain Rambouillet's band followed the road indicated by Maldent ; but Captain Saint-André pretended that he had a good guide of his own, and preferred to follow him. Each captain was so self-confident that the admiral did not dare to require them to rely, as he did, upon Maldent. Monsieur de Saint-André therefore went his own way, and left the admiral to pursue his.

No obstacle presented itself on the road to St. Quentin. The city had not been wholly surrounded : one of its sides, that of the Faubourg de Ponthoille, had been reserved for the English army, which might arrive at any moment ; and it was precisely on this side that the admiral had approached.

On the heights of Savy — that is to say, three quarters of a league from St. Quentin — Coligny had taken a precautionary survey of the situation, and had seen the fires of the hostile army extending from the chapel of Épargne-maille almost as far as Gaillard. It seemed to the admiral as if the way had been purposely made easy for his little troop ; and the facility offered made him not a little uneasy, for he feared an ambuscade.

Procope, whom frequent conversations with Maldent had rendered familiar with the patois of Picardy, offered to go and reconnoitre ; the admiral consented, and ordered a halt.

In three quarters of an hour the adventurer returned ; the road was perfectly clear, and he had been able to approach so near the ramparts that he could see the sentinel pacing between the gate of Ponthoille and the tower opposite the Oisons meadows.

When just beyond the little arm of the river, which at that period ran along the foot of the wall, Procope had whistled to the sentinel, who had stopped pacing, and strained his eyes to see through the darkness. Procope had whistled a second time, and confident that he had been seen, he had announced in a low voice the admiral's approach. In consequence of this, the watch at the gate of Ponthoille would be informed, and the admiral would be admitted immediately upon his arrival.

Coligny praised Procope's intelligence, approved all he had done, and easier in mind once more set out, still under the guidance of Maldent.

At a short distance from the gate a man sprang out of a trench ; he held in his hand a pistol, ready to fire if the troop should prove to be a hostile one. On the ramparts patches of denser darkness were seen. A hundred men had been called to this point to guard against any surprise which might be hidden under the intelligence which Procope had confided to the sentinel.

The man with the pistol, who sprang from the trench, was Lieutenant Théligny. He advanced, saying, "France and Théligny ! "

"France and Coligny !" replied the admiral.

The recognition was complete. It was indeed the promised reinforcement ; the gates were immediately opened, and the admiral entered with his hundred and twenty men.

The news of the arrival soon spread through the town ; and the inhabitants, half dressed, ran out of their houses uttering cries of joy. Many wished to illuminate ; some had already begun to do so.

The admiral ordered them to be silent and to put out their lights. He feared that the hostile army would be put on the alert, and would redouble their vigilance. Besides, Saint-André and his troop had not yet arrived.

At three o'clock in the morning nothing had been heard of them. Then, when day was about to dawn, and it became a matter of urgent importance that they should not encounter any detachment of the Spanish army, Lac-tance came forward with six or eight of his Jacobins. These good fathers, whose dress would shield them from all suspicion, offered to spread themselves out over the country for the distance of a league or two, and bring back the lost troops.

Their offer was accepted ; and they departed, some through the gate of Ponthoille and some through the postern St. Catherine.

Between four and five o'clock in the morning a first troop, of sixty men, appeared, led by two Jacobin fathers. At six o'clock a second troop, of fifty-five or sixty men, also led by a monk, arrived, accompanied by Captain Saint-André himself. Their guide had lost his way, and they had gone astray with him.

The other monks came in one after another ; and God, who protected them, had thus far permitted no misfortune to overtake them. As soon as all the men had returned, Coligny ordered the roll to be called. He found that his troops had all arrived, and that the garrison was reinforced by two hundred and fifty men. This was numerically a feeble addition ; but the presence of their leader, by giving courage to the more timid, had produced an immense moral effect.

Théligny, the mayor, and the governor of the city gave the admiral an exact account of what had taken place the day before. More than ever convinced that it was necessary to defend the Faubourg d'Isle, even to the last extremity, Coligny turned his steps in that direction. On top of the old wall, in the midst of the balls which whistled around him, he decided that at nightfall a

sally should be made for the purpose of burning the neighboring houses, from the interior of which the Spaniards were continually annoying the soldiers who guarded the ramparts. If they succeeded and could retake from the enemy the boulevard they had captured the day before, they could then dig a trench in front of the old wall, in order to cover it with a mask and protect it against the assaults of the besiegers.

Meantime and in order to concentrate upon this point every means of defence possible, the admiral also ordered them to open an embrasure in each side of the rampart, and to place in each two pieces of cannon.

When the execution of these important measures had been provided for, Coligny judged it expedient to examine into the quality and number of the enemy confronting him. It was easy, by the banners upon their tents, to recognize the nationality of the soldiers and of the princes who commanded them.

From the place where he stood, that is to say, the foremost angle of the old wall, the admiral perceived on his right three camps perfectly distinct from one another, each situated on a hill. The most distant camp was that of Count Schwarzbourg. The intermediate camp was that of Count Egmont and Count Horn,—those two inseparables who were not divided even in death. The nearest camp was that of Emmanuel Philibert.

Directly opposite the admiral were the Spanish troops which had made the attack the day before, and which were commanded by Don Julian Romero and Captain Carondelet. Finally, on his left was the extreme point of the principal camp. This camp, which occupied nearly half a league of ground, and in which the Duke of Savoy later pitched his tents, was almost entirely surrounded by the river Somme, which forms a semicircle

from its source to the point where it flows between St. Quentin and the Faubourg d'Isle. It extended along the entire side of the wall, from the river to the Faubourg St. Jean.

This camp contained the quarters of Field-Marshal Binincourt, Margrave de Berg, Margrave de Valle, the Duke of Saïmona, Count Schwarzbourg, Count Mansfield, Bernardo de Mendoza, Ferdinand de Gonzaga, the Bishop of Arras, Count de Feria, Count Rinago, Marshal de Carcheris, Duke Eric of Brunswick, Duke Ernest of Brunswick, Don Juan Manrico, Messire de Bossu, Messire de Berlaintont, Comte de Mègue, and Sieur Lazare Swendy, and lastly, the quarters of the heavy cavalry, the halberdiers, and the rebels.

Between the tower of St. Jean and the big tower—that is to say, opposite to the Faubourg d'Isle—extended the Flemish camp; and a battery was erected which threw such a fire that until this day the road where it stood is called the street of Hell.

Finally, there remained that side of the city which extends from the Faubourg de Ponthoille to Tourival, which, as we have said, was entirely unoccupied,—this position having been reserved for the English army, which had not yet arrived.

This preparatory inspection over, the admiral descended to the town-house. There he asked for a list of all the able men, and commanded a search to be made for all the arms in the city; he ordered a paper to be drawn up for the signature of every man or woman who was willing to assist at the earthworks; he commanded a collection to be made of all the tools, baskets, shovels, and picks, and an inventory to be drawn up of all the grain, flour, wine, cattle, and provisions of all sorts, whether in public stores or private houses,—so that the consumption of material might be regulated, and pillage prevented. And finally,

ne demanded an exact statement of the number of guns and gunners ready for service, and of the quantity of ammunition available.

In his tour of inspection, the admiral had seen only two mills,—a windmill situated at the end of the Rue du Billon, near the Tour Rouge, and a water-mill upon the Somme, in the Faubourg d'Isle. These were not enough to grind corn sufficient for the consumption of a city of twenty thousand souls. He gave expression to this fear. But the aldermen reassured him by affirming that there were in the city fifteen or sixteen hand-mills, which could be continuously worked by the application of horse power, and would be sufficient for the provisioning of the city and garrison.

Then Coligny arranged the quarters of the companies, dividing the city into four parts, and subdividing these into sixteen parts, to the government of which he appointed sixteen citizens and sixteen officers, so that in all decisions there might be harmony between the two parties. The military troop was assigned to the defence of the walls conjointly with the citizen soldiers, each band so composed having its own special locality to protect. The city council remained in permanent session, so as to be ready to answer without delay all applications addressed to it.

Finally, the admiral presented to the city government the gentlemen who constituted what at the present time would be called his staff, and who were to be his representatives with the magistrates. In addition to, and independent of these officers, Captain Languetot was appointed superintendent of artillery, with the command of ten men-at-arms, whose office it was to measure for the gunners the quantity of powder used each day, and who were particularly charged with seeing that this precious powder was protected from every danger.

In going over the ramparts Coligny had observed near the gate St. Jean, scarcely a hundred steps from the wall, a great number of gardens filled with fruit-trees and surrounded with tall and thick hedges ; these hedges and trees offered the enemy a shelter under which they could approach the ramparts. As these gardens belonged to the principal citizens, the admiral asked the council's permission to cut them down. Their consent was obtained without any difficulty, and every carpenter in the city was put into requisition to cut down the trees and hedges. Of the brushwood fascines were to be made.

Then, seeing the assembly united and harmonious, — nobles, bourgeois, and soldiers animated if not by the same enthusiasm, at least by an equal energy, — Coligny retired to the governor's house, where he had engaged to meet the officers of the companies.

This house was situated in the Rue de la Monnaie, between the Templerie and the Jacobins. There the officers were made acquainted with all the admiral had done. He informed them of the good feeling existing among the citizens, and of the general determination to defend the city to the last extremity, and requested them, while alleviating, so far as they were able, the hardships of the situation, to maintain harmony between those two powers ordinarily so difficult to reconcile, the army and the bourgeoisie. Each captain was to furnish an account of his company, so that the admiral should know exactly the number of the men at his command, and the number of mouths he was obliged to feed.

Then ascending with an engineer to the gallery of the collegiate church, the admiral pointed out from this post of observation, which overlooked the whole circumvallation of the city, the excavations to be made and the elevations to be levelled.

When these orders had been given, and he was alone with the officer whom he intended to send to the constable for a reinforcement of troops, while it was still possible to re-victual the place, he decided that the Savy road, hidden by vines, and winding through a chain of little hills by the chapel of Épargniemaille, was the most favorable one by which to lead the troops to the place. Captain Saint-André had indeed in open day arrived unobserved from this direction.

All these arrangements having been completed, Coligny was reminded at last that he was a man, and returned to the house to take a few hours of rest.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ADVENTURERS' TENT.

WHILE all these measures for the public safety were being ordered by Coligny, upon whom rested the entire responsibility of the defence of the city, and who, somewhat reassured, as we have said, by the ardor of the soldiers and the courage of the bourgeois, had returned to the governor's house to take the rest he so much needed, — our adventurers, also ready to fight in defence of the city because Coligny had hired them, indifferent to everything, awaiting patiently the first signal of the trumpet and drum, had pitched their tent about a hundred steps from the Porte d'Isle, and established their quarters on an unoccupied piece of ground which extended, opposite the Cordeliers, from the extremity of the Rue Wager to the foot of the wall. Upon the entrance of Coligny into St. Quentin, they were once more reunited, and set about adjusting their accounts.

Yvonnet had just turned into the treasury half of the sum which he owed to the liberality of King Henri II.; Procope, half of the gratuities he had received as scribe; Maldent, half the wages which had been paid him as guide; Malemort, the reward he had earned in going, wounded as he was, to inform Coligny of the arrival of the Spaniards; and lastly, Pilletrousse, half of what he had gained in cutting up and selling the beef procured by the two Scharfensteins.

As for the latter, as they had not been concerned in any combat, they had nothing to add to the general fund, and occupied themselves, without anxiety as to the future want of supplies the blockade of the city might occasion, in roasting the quarter of beef remaining after the distribution of the other three quarters by Pilletrousse.

Lactance brought two great bags of corn and a bag of beans, which he proffered as his contribution, instead of money ; it was a present to our adventurers from the convent of the Jacobins, whose monks, having enlisted, had chosen, as we know, Lactance for their captain.

Fracasso continued his fruitless search for a rhyme for the verb *perdre*.

Under a sort of shed, hastily built, the two horses, Yvonnet's and Malemort's, chewed their straw and enjoyed their oats. A portable mill was set up under this shed, not on account of the proximity of the horses, but that it might be under cover ; the task of turning it belonged to Heinrich and Frantz.

The pecuniary affairs of the society were thus in good condition ; forty gold crowns, carefully counted by Procope, counted again by Maldent, and laid in a pile by Pilletrousse, were ready to be put into the society's cash-box.

If the society should continue another year in this prosperity, Procope intended to purchase a notary's or attorney's office ; Maldent proposed to buy a little farm situated on the road from La Fère to Ham, of which he had knowledge from good authority, being, as we have said, a native of the country ; Yvonnet expected to marry some rich heiress, to whose hand his elegance and his fortune would now enable him to urge a double claim ; Pilletrousse would like to establish a large market business either in the capital or in some leading provincial town ; Fracasso's idea

was to publish his poems after the fashion of Monsieur Ronsard and Monsieur Jodelle ; finally, Malemort wished for an opportunity to fight on his own account and as long as it should suit him ; this would save him from the reproaches of his comrades and fellow-soldiers, who constantly admonished him upon his indifference to the safety of his person.

As to the two Scharfensteins, they had no project, having no forethought.

Just as Maldent had finished counting the crowns, and Pilletrousse had placed the last of them on the pile, a shadow was cast upon the adventurers, indicating that an opaque body had been interposed between them and the light. Instinctively, Procope extended his hand toward the gold ; Maldent, still more quickly, placed his hat on it.

Yvonnet turned round. The same young man who had wished to buy his horse was standing in the entrance of the tent. Quickly as Maldent had covered the money with his hat, the unknown had seen it, and with the keen eye of a man to whom estimates of this kind are familiar, he had calculated that the sum which they had hastened to conceal from his view must amount to fifty gold crowns.

"Ah, ah !" he said, "it seems that the harvest has been good ! I fear that I come at a bad time for business ; you will be as hard as the devil, my masters."

"That depends on what the business is," said Procope.

"There are different kinds of business," said Maldent.

"Is there any chance of gain outside of your proposition ?" asked Pilletrousse.

"If there is any fighting to do, I might accommodate you," said Malemort.

"If it were not an expedition against some church or some convent, it might be arranged," said Lactance.

"Especially if it could be executed by moonlight," said Fracasso. "I like night expeditions; they are the only ones that are poetical and picturesque."

Yvonnet said nothing, but regarded the stranger attentively.

The two Scharfensteins were absorbed in the cooking of their piece of beef.

These observations, each one of which was characteristic of the individual who made it, were uttered almost simultaneously by the adventurers.

The young man smiled. He replied to all the questions at the same time, looking successively at that one of the adventurers whose question he was for the moment answering.

"Yes, the business is serious," he said, "very serious indeed; and although there may be chances of gain outside of my proposal, as there will be some fighting to do, I intend to offer you a reasonable sum, which ought to satisfy any one. And those religiously disposed may rest assured," he added; "for it concerns neither convent nor church, and it is probable that for greater security we shall act at night. I must say, however, that I prefer a dark night to a bright one."

"Then," said Procope, who usually took it upon himself to discuss the interests of the society, "unfold your scheme, and let us see if it is acceptable."

"You must engage to follow me, whether it be to a nocturnal expedition or to a skirmish, a battle, or a combat in broad day."

"And what shall we have to do in this nocturnal expedition, in this skirmish, this combat, or this battle?"

"You will have to attack the person whom I shall attack; you will have to surround and kill him."

"And what if he surrenders?"

"I warn you beforehand that I shall show no mercy."

"*Peste !*" said Procope, "it is a mortal hatred, then ?"

"Mortal ! — you have said it, my friend."

"Good !" muttered Malemort, rubbing his hands ; "that is what I call talking."

"But," said Maldent, "if the ransom were good, it seems to me it would be better to receive ransom than to kill."

"I will negotiate for the ransom and the death at the same time, in order that these two cases may be provided for."

"That is to say," replied Procope, "that you buy him of us, living or dead ?"

"Living or dead, — that is it."

"How much for the dead, and how much for the living ?"

"The same price."

"And yet," said Maldent, "it seems to me that a living man is worth much more than a dead one."

"No ; for I shall buy the living man that he may become a dead one."

"Well," said Procope, "how much will you give ?"

"One moment, Procope," said Yvonnet ; "let Monsieur de Waldeck tell us who this person is ?"

The young man started back. "You spoke a name !" he said.

"Your name, Monsieur," replied Yvonnet, while the adventurers looked at one another, beginning to comprehend that it was the lover of Mademoiselle Gudule to whom they might best leave the defence of their interests.

The young man knit his thick red brow. "And how do you happen to know me ?" he asked.

"Do you wish me to tell you ?" replied Yvonnet.

Waldeck hesitated.

"Recall the Château du Parcq," continued the adventurer.

Waldeck turned pale.

"Recall the forest of St. Pol-sur-Ternoise."

"It is just because I do recall it that I am here, and that I make this proposal which you are discussing."

"Then it is the Duke Emmanuel Philibert whom you wish us to kill?" said Yvonnet, quietly.

"*Peste!*" cried Procope, "the Duke of Savoy!"

"You see that it is best to be explicit," said Yvonnet to his companions, casting at them a side glance.

"And why should we not kill the Duke of Savoy?" cried Malemort.

"I do not say we should not kill the Duke of Savoy," replied Procope.

"All right!" said Malemort; "the Duke of Savoy is our enemy, since we are engaged to Monsieur l'Amiral, and I do not see why we should not kill the Duke of Savoy as well as another."

"You are perfectly right, Malemort," replied Procope; "we can kill the Duke of Savoy as well as another, only he would be dearer than another."

Maldent made a sign of assent. "Much dearer," he said.

"To say nothing," said Lactance, "of risking one's soul."

"Bah!" said Waldeck, with his sinister smile; "do you think that if there were no other reason for his going to hell, Benvenuto Cellini would have been damned for killing the Constable de Bourbon?"

"The Constable de Bourbon was a rebel; that makes a difference," said Procope.

"And then, for fighting against Pope Clement VII., he

was excommunicated," added Lactance, "and it was a pious deed to kill him."

"As far as that is concerned, your Duke of Savoy is a friend of Pope Paul IV.," replied Waldeck.

"Oh, never mind all that," said Pilletrousse; "what is the price?"

"Yes," said Waldeck, "that is the point. Well, what do you say to five hundred gold crowns,—one hundred crowns down to bind the bargain, and four hundred when the thing is done?"

Procope shook his head. "I say that we are far from coming to an agreement."

"I am sorry for that," replied Waldeck; "for, to lose no time, I have made my final offer. I have five hundred gold crowns, and not a carolus more; if you refuse it, I shall be obliged to negotiate elsewhere."

The adventurers looked at one another; five out of seven shook their heads. Malemort alone was in favor of accepting, because there would be fighting. Fracasso had relapsed into his poetic reveries.

"Well," said Waldeck, "there is no hurry. Take time to consider. I know you, and you know me; we live in the same city, and can easily find one another." And bowing slightly, he turned upon his heels and left them.

"Shall we call him back?" said Procope.

"Five hundred gold crowns are not found every day, forsooth," said Maldent.

"And then, if it is really all that he has, of course he can give nothing more."

"My brothers," said Lactance, "the lives of princes are under the special guardianship of Heaven, and we risk our souls by attacking them. We should not therefore do it except for a sum sufficient to pay for indulgences for all of us, which we shall need whether we succeed or not. The

intention, brothers, — the worthy prior of the Jacobins told me so yesterday, — must be taken for the deed."

"It is true," said Pilletrousse, "that it is worth much more than is offered us. But suppose we do it on our own account."

"Yes," said Malemort, "let us do it."

"Gentlemen," interrupted Procope, "the idea belongs to Monsieur de Waldeck ; it would be robbery to take his idea which he has confided to us. You know my principles in matters of right."

"Well," replied Yvonnet, "if the idea, as you say, is his own property, I think we had better accept the five hundred gold crowns."

"Yes, let us accept and fight !" cried Malemort.

"Oh, there is no hurry," said Maldent.

"What if he should negotiate with others ?" said Yvonnet.

"Yes, what if he should negotiate with others ?" repeated Procope.

"Let us accept and fight !" howled Malemort.

"Yes, yes, let us accept !" cried every voice.

"Accept !" said the two Scharfensteins, who just at this moment entered bearing upon a board their piece of roasted beef, and who, without knowing what was the subject in question, decided with the majority, showing as always their good sense.

"Then one of us must run after him and call him back," said Procope.

"I will," said Malemort. And he sprang up to do so ; but just at that moment he heard in the direction of the Faubourg d'Isle a few shots, which were immediately followed by a brisk fusillade.

"Oh, battle, battle !" cried Malemort, drawing his sword and running in the direction of the sound of the

firing, which was exactly contrary to that taken by Waldeck, who was going toward the Tour à l'Eau.

"Oh, oh ! they are fighting in the Faubourg d'Isle ! I must go and look after Gudule," cried Yvonnet.

"But the business ?" cried Procope, in his turn.

"I leave it to you to settle," said Yvonnet ; "what you decide upon will be satisfactory. I give you power of attorney." And he darted after Malemort, who had already crossed the first bridge and had reached the island forming the pass St. Pierre.

Let us follow Malemort and Yvonnet, and see what is going on in the Faubourg d'Isle.

CHAPTER IX.

BATTLE.

THE reader will remember that before entering the governor's house, the admiral had given orders that a sally should be made at nightfall, for the purpose of burning the houses situated along the outer boulevard, under cover of which the Spaniards discharged their guns at the defenders of the city, who, occupying an inner elevation, were exposed to the full force of the enemy's fire.

This order had been given to Messieurs de Théligny, de Jarnac, and de Luzarches. Consequently, at six o'clock in the evening the three officers had assembled a hundred men from their respective companies, and a hundred and twenty volunteer citizens, led by Guillaume and Jean Pauquet. These two hundred and twenty men were to attack two thousand.

Scarcely thirty feet from the old wall, the road divided, as we have already said. One branch led to Guise and the other to La Fère. Upon both sides of this road and upon each one of its branches were situated the houses which were to be destroyed.

The little band, after leaving the old wall, would have to divide, one attacking on the right, the other on the left, all setting fire at the same time. Guillaume and Jean Pauquet, who were acquainted with the locality, served as guides, each conducting one of the bands.

At half-past six o'clock in the evening the gate of the Faubourg d'Isle was opened, and the little troop set out at

a double-quick step. But secretly and rapidly as the movement had been executed, it had been signalled by the sentinels, and the sally had been anticipated by Carondelet and Don Julian Romero. Consequently at the corner of each street the French found a body of Spaniards double their own number, and from every window death fell upon them.

Such, however, was the impetuosity of the attack that the ranks of the Spaniards who were defending the two streets were broken, and in spite of the firing from the windows five or six houses were entered.

It need not be said that Malemort, screaming, yelling, swearing, and above all, striking, had managed to steal up to the head of one of the columns, and to be the first to enter a house. Once in the house, he forgot that the purpose of the entrance was to set fire, and springing up the stairs, he gained the upper story. Those who entered after him forgot that he had gone in first, and mindful only of their instructions, they piled up fagots in the lower rooms, and particularly at the foot of the staircase. Then they set fire to them. The same thing was done in two or three houses along the boulevard.

The Spaniards had taken the attack for an ordinary sally ; but from the clouds of smoke which issued from the windows on the ground-floor they soon divined the object of the French. Then they rallied with all their strength, and fell with their tenfold superiority of numbers upon the little troop, which was driven back. But the latter had not wholly failed in its purpose, for the flames were coming through the roofs of several houses.

The reader doubtless remembers that Yvonnet, not having been ordered to the sally, had conceived the idea of utilizing his time by going to see Gudule, whose fears he did his best to quiet. Her fears were indeed very great ;

for, as we have said, the young girl's father and uncle had gone as guides with the two columns which had made the sally.

For a moment the cries, the shouts, the noise of the fusillade reached such a degree of violence that Yvonnet himself was curious to know what was taking place ; he climbed into the garret, followed by the young girl, who remained as close to him as his shadow, partly through fear, but more through love. By looking from the garret-window Yvonnet could see all that was going on.

The rumble of the firing still continued, and at the same time the clash of arms indicated that the hand-to-hand struggle was sustained in the streets. But this was not all. As we have said, the smoke was issuing from the windows of four or five houses, and in the midst of the smoke human beings were seen running as if in fright. These were the Spaniards overtaken by the fire, and who, now that the stairways were in flames, could not leave the upper stories of the houses.

In all these houses movements indicating alarm were to be seen ; but in one of them especially the alarm seemed to rise even to terror. It was that in which Malemort was at work, who, indifferent to the flames, attacked, struck, and fought in the midst of the smoke.

At the moment when Yvonnet began looking out of the window, the scene of combat was the second story. The most prudent of the Spaniards who defended this second story, having to struggle at once against fire and a man who seemed to be the devil himself, leaped through the windows. The others instinctively fled to the third story. Malemort no longer concerned himself with those who had jumped from the windows, but pursued the fugitives to the third story, thundering out his favorite cry, — “Battle !”

All this time the fire was performing its work of destruction ; Malemort pursued the Spaniards, the fire pursued Malemort. Doubtless the adventurer owed at this time his exceptional invulnerability to the powerful ally which came on behind him, and to which he seemed to pay no attention.

Soon the smoke obscured the third story as it had done the second, and the fire darted its tongues of flame through the flooring. One or two Spaniards, braving the danger of the fall, leaped from the windows of the third story, as their comrades had done from those of the second story. Others tried to escape over the roof. Two could be seen going out by an upper window, and one half of a third ; but the latter seemed suddenly arrested in his exit, and indicated by movements the meaning of which was unmistakable that the part of his body left in the house was undergoing something very disagreeable. Indeed Malemort was inflicting heavy strokes of the sword upon this too tardy part.

The Spaniard, after making vain attempts to rejoin his companions climbing over the ridge of the roof, fell backward, and in spite of a last effort to grasp the ledge of the window, went out of sight.

Five seconds later it was Malemort's face — recognizable by the linen bandage — which appeared at the garret-window in the place of the Spaniard's. He saw his two enemies flying, and set out in pursuit of them. He might have been a slater or a rope-dancer, with so firm a step did he walk upon the narrow path. If he had been a Mussulman, his shade could have certainly crossed at death, without the aid of a balancing-pole, that bridge to the Mahometan paradise which leads from earth to heaven and which is no wider than the edge of a razor.

The two fugitives soon discovered the danger with

which they were threatened. One of them, at the risk of breaking his back, slid down the declivity of the roof, and clung to the ledge of the garret-window, through which he disappeared into the house. This house standing between two burning ones had so far escaped the flames.

Malemort did not trouble himself about the Spaniard who had just accomplished so successfully the perilous slide, and continued his pursuit of the one who remained.

From their observatory, Yvonnet and Gudule watched this aerial feat of gymnastics,—Yvonnet with the pleasure which such a spectacle inspires in a man; Gudule with the terror with which it would naturally affect a woman.

The two acrobats reached, by passing from roof to roof, the last house, which seemed, after the fashion of some of our old houses, to bend over to look into the river. The house was of wood, and was burning on every side.

Having reached the edge of the roof, and perceiving that he could fly no farther,—unless Saint James, the patron saint of Spain, lent him wings,—the fugitive, who probably could not swim, turned around, resolved to sell his life dearly. The struggle began; but just as it reached its highest degree of fury, the smoke and flame began to burst through the roof upon which the combatants were standing; then the roof trembled, then fell in, drawing the two men into the frightful crater.

One of them disappeared entirely. The other clung to a beam, burning but still solid, regained his feet, made his way all on fire toward the extremity of the beam, and springing from the height of the third story, extinguished the fire on his person by plunging into the Somme.

Gudule uttered a loud cry; Yvonnet almost jumped out of the window; both held their breath for a moment. Would the bold diver be swallowed up forever or would

he reappear? Then, again, was this the Spaniard or was it Malemort?

Soon the surface of the river was agitated and a head appeared, then arms, then a body swimming with the current toward a point on the shore behind the old wall. When they saw the swimmer taking that direction, they were very sure that it was Malemort.

Yvonnet and Gudule ran quickly down to the place where in all probability the swimmer would land. They arrived just in time to draw from the water, half burned and nearly drowned, the fierce fighter, who at the end of his strength fainted in their arms while waving his sword and crying out in a stifled voice, "Battle! battle!"

Serious as was Malemort's condition, others had not escaped so fortunately as he. Repulsed, as we have said, by the veteran troops of Carondelet and Don Julian, the soldiers and the bourgeois, after succeeding in burning two or three houses, being forced to retreat in disorder, became massed at the gate of the old wall in such a way as to afford the Spaniards every facility for taking their revenge. Thirty soldiers and twenty citizens were left dead, and the enemy very nearly succeeded in entering the faubourg with those whom they pursued. Yvonnet heard the cries of the Spaniards, who were already shouting, "The city is taken!" He ran to the adventurers' tent, calling them to arms, and returned with a reinforcement of a hundred men, a part of whom spread themselves about over the ramparts, while the rest met the enemy, already trying to force their way into the faubourg.

But at the head of those who came to the assistance of the faubourg were the two Scharfensteins, armed one with his sledge and the other with his two-edged sword. Blows fell upon the Spaniards as rapid as those of the flail upon

the threshing-floor, and they were obliged to retire before the two giants.

When the Spaniards were driven back from the arch it was necessary to close the gates. This was a difficult task, for the assailants opposed it with all their strength, some pushing on the gates with their hands, others with the but-ends of their muskets, others still with beams; but the two Scharfensteins succeeded in slipping in between the opposed forces and the wall, and bracing themselves against the gates with feet and hands, began moving them with a slow but regular and irresistible progress until they were completely closed, and the iron cross-bar was put in its place.

This work accomplished, they breathed heavily, and so in unison that they might have been said to have but one breast for their two bodies. Scarcely had they heaved this heavy sigh of relief when a cry of terror arose,—“To the walls! to the walls!”

Two breaches indeed had been made in the wall, one on each side of the gate, for the purpose of transporting earth to the artillery platforms. These breaches had been filled with hurdles and bales of wool. The besiegers, driven from the gate, had noticed the breaches, and attempted, by making use of them, to carry the town in a sudden assault.

The two Scharfensteins, in springing back from the gateway, needed only to cast a glance around them to appreciate the imminence of the danger. In spite of their custom of fighting together, the separation of their forces was at this time so necessary that after exchanging a few words, with that moderation of speech which characterized them, they hastened, the uncle to the breach on the right and the nephew to that on the left.

The attacking party, provided with those long pikes

which were at that period the weapons used by the Spanish infantry, made their assault on both sides of the gate at the same time, and drove before it citizens and soldiers, forced to retreat before that harvest of steel which the wind of war bent against them.

Heinrich Scharfenstein, armed for the time with the sledge, saw that he could not do much with that short and heavy weapon against the Spanish pikes, which were about ten feet long ; and therefore, as he ran forward, he hung his sledge to his belt, picked up from the wall a block of stone, and not at all impeded by the enormous weight he was carrying, arrived at the breach, crying out, “Take care ! take care !”

It was the very breach at which Yvonnet was fighting. The latter saw Scharfenstein, perceived his intention, and opened with a movement of his sword a sort of path toward the Spaniards, who had begun to make the ascent. Just as they had climbed about half-way up the wall, the giant appeared on the top of the breach, raised above his head the stone which until then he had carried on his shoulders, and adding the impetus of his own strength to the natural weight of the projectile, hurled it down upon the front rank of the Spanish with a force equal to that of the most powerful catapult.

The rock fell, bounding through the serried column, breaking, crushing, grinding as it went. Then through that open way Heinrich sprang, and striking right and left, finished with his terrible club those whom the gigantic rock had spared or had only half killed. On this side in less than ten minutes the breach was cleared.

Frantz had been equally successful. He also had cried, “Take care !” and at the sound of his voice the ranks of the soldiers and citizens had opened ; then with his great two-handed sword he began to mow down this harvest of

lances, cutting down at each blow five or six, as easily as Tarquin in the gardens of Gabies cut off the poppy-heads in the presence of his son's messenger. Then, when he had before him men armed only with sticks, he threw himself into the Spanish ranks, and set himself to cutting down the men as furiously as he had attacked the lances. At this point also the Spaniards retreated.

But an unforeseen incident came near depriving the brave Frantz of all the profit to be gained by the glorious assistance he had brought to the defenders of St. Quentin. A man fiercer even than he for human quarry glided under his arm, crying, "Battle ! battle !" and started in pursuit of the Spaniards. This was Malemort, who, having recovered consciousness, had swallowed a bottle of wine given him by Gudule, and had returned to the charge.

Unfortunately, two or three of those whom our adventurer was pursuing, seeing that they were pursued by only one man, turned around, and although their broken lances left them no weapon but a stick, one of them with a blow of his stick knocked Malemort senseless.

Citizens and soldiers uttered a cry of lamentation. Fortunately, Frantz had some idea of the thickness of his companion's skull. He ran up to him, cleft in two with one blow of his formidable sword the Spaniard who was about to put an end to Malemort's life with a dagger, took Malemort by the feet, and supposing that he had no time to lose, returned on the run to the breach, where he threw Malemort — who was beginning to open his eyes and murmur "Battle !" — into the arms of Lactance, who was coming up with his Jacobins.

Behind the monks came the admiral, leading a little troop of selected arquebusiers, who opened so well sustained a fire upon the outward boulevard and upon the

houses situated upon it that the Spaniards remained quiet under shelter.

The admiral found upon inquiry that the loss had been great, and that the Faubourg d'Isle had hardly escaped being taken by assault. Many captains entreated the admiral to abandon this point, which had already cost the garrison sixty men. But Coligny persisted ; he saw that the prolongation of the siege, if not the safety of the city, depended on the occupation of this faubourg. He therefore ordered that they should take advantage of the night, which was coming on, to repair the two breaches and put everything in order. The Jacobins, whose dark dress rendered them less conspicuous, were appointed to this work, which they undertook with the quiet devotion of monastic courage. As a nocturnal attack was feared, the arquebusiers watched upon the ramparts, while, in order to give the alarm in case the enemy should conceive the idea of going around by the old wall, sentinels were placed twenty steps apart along the edge of the marshes of the Somme.

It was a terrible night for the city of St. Quentin, that night of the 3d and 4th of August, when it mourned its first killed !

Each one watched over his house and his neighborhood as the sentinels watched over the Faubourg d'Isle.

The poor inhabitants of the faubourg, who knew that it would be the point of the fiercest attack and defence, left their houses, dragging after them in carts or carrying upon hand-barrows their most precious possessions. Among the emigrants who abandoned the faubourg to seek refuge in the city was Guillaume Pauquet, to whom his brother Jean offered the hospitality of his house, which stood on the corner of the Rue du Vieux-Marché and the Rue des Arbalétriers.

Leaning on his arm, his daughter Gudule, still quite stunned by the events of the day, entered the city, turning round from time to time on pretence of great grief at leaving to certain destruction that house where she was born, but in reality to assure herself that the handsome Yvonnet did not lose sight of her.

Yvonnet followed indeed at a reasonable distance the citizen, his daughter, and the weavers whom Jean Pauquet had offered to his brother to help in transporting his household goods, and who discharged this duty conscientiously.

It was a great consolation to the poor Gudule to see that the young man traversed St. Quentin through its whole length, crossed the public square before the town-house from one corner to the other, followed along the Rue St. Marguerite and the Rue du Vieux-Marché, and finally entered his uncle's house at the corner of the Rue aux Pourceaux.

Under pretext of great fatigue (and the pretext was a plausible one after such a day), Gudule asked to be shewn to her room,—a request which was immediately granted.

Gudule began to think that there was really a guardian spirit watching over lovers when she saw that the apartments her uncle had assigned to her father and herself were in a sort of pavilion in the corner of the garden, and looked upon the road which ran round the ramparts. When she was alone in her new domicile, her first care was to extinguish her light, as if she had gone to bed, and open her window to examine the surroundings, and see what facilities this window offered for an escalade.

She found that the window was easy of access; that portion of the rampart which extended between the gate of the Vieux-Marché and the Dameuse Tower was cer-

tainly the most deserted in the city. A ladder eight or ten feet long placed against the window could perform the same service in the Rue des Arbalétriers as the stepping-stone at the house in the Faubourg d'Isle.

It is true that only a thin partition separated her room from that of her father, and that the least sound in this chamber might move the susceptibility of the paternal ear; but this difficulty could be avoided if Gudule should descend by the ladder to meet Yvonnet upon the ramparts. In that way, unless the lovers were unfortunate, the chamber might be left unoccupied, and, by necessity, to silence.

Gudule was deep in these strategic combinations, which for the moment made of her almost as skilful a tactician as the admiral, when she saw a shadow gliding along the garden wall.

Yvonnet was engaged in the same exploration, and was reconnoitring the ground which was to be the scene of his manœuvres.

The siege of this house of Maître Pauquet would not be a difficult one, especially for a man who, like our adventurer, had the advantage of co-operation from within.

In a few words everything was arranged for the following night. Then, as she heard on the stairs the step of Guillaume Pauquet, somewhat heavy from the fatigue of the day, Gudule closed her window, and Yvonnet disappeared down the Rue St. Jean.

CHAPTER X.

MONSIEUR DE THÉLIGNY.

MORNING found the admiral again upon the rampart. Far from being cast down by the failure of the day before, Gaspard de Coligny had determined to make another attempt.

In his opinion the enemy knew that a reinforcement had entered the city, but were ignorant of its importance ; it was necessary for them to believe that this reinforcement was more powerful than it was in reality.

In that case Duke Emmanuel Philibert would be induced to undertake a regular siege, since he would despair of carrying the city by storm. Now a regular siege meant a respite of ten days, fifteen days, perhaps a month, during which the constable might make some attempt, and the king have time to take measures.

The admiral therefore sent for the young lieutenant of the dauphin's company, Monsieur de Théligny.

The latter hastened to obey. He had fought valiantly the night before in the Faubourg d'Isle, and yet he had come safe and sound out of the battle ; so that the soldiers who had seen him in the midst of the fusillade, the swords, and the lances, on finding that he had not received a scratch, had called him the Invulnerable.

He approached the admiral bright and smiling, like a man who had just done his duty and was ready to do it again. The admiral took him behind the parapet of a tower.

"Monsieur de Théligny," he said, "you can see from here the position of the Spaniards?"

Théligny signified that he could see perfectly.

"Well, it appears to me easy to make a surprise with thirty or forty cavaliers. Select thirty or forty men from your company; put at their head a reliable man, and attack that position."

"But, Monsieur l'Amiral," asked Théligny, laughing, "why should not I myself be that reliable man who shall command the sally? I admit that I have confidence in my officers, but I have still greater confidence in myself."

The admiral laid his hand upon his shoulder. "My dear Théligny," he said, "men of your stamp are rare; that is the reason why we must not risk them in skirmishes, and expose them to unexpected encounters. Give me your word of honor that you will not command the sally, or, dying with fatigue as I am, I shall remain upon the ramparts."

"If that is the case, Monsieur l'Amiral," said Théligny, bowing, "retire, take your rest, and leave to me the care of the enterprise; I promise not to go beyond the gate of the city."

"I rely upon your promise, Monsieur," the admiral said gravely.

Then, as if he wished it understood that the gravity of his face and voice applied only to this request that he would not leave the city, he added, "As for myself, my dear Théligny, I shall not return to the governor's house, which is too far off; I shall go to Monsieur de Jarnac's, throw myself on a bed, and sleep for an hour or two. You will find me there."

"Sleep in peace, Monsieur l'Amiral!" replied Théligny. "I will watch."

The admiral descended from the rampart opposite the

tower of Guise, and entered the second house in the Rue de Rémicourt, in which Monsieur de Jarnac lived.

Théligny looked after him for a while ; then turning to an officer he said, "Thirty or forty volunteers from the dauphin's company !"

" You shall have them immediately, Lieutenant," replied the officer.

" How is that ? I have given no order."

" That is true ; but Monsieur l'Amiral's words were seized upon by one of the hearers, who signified that he understood, and who has gone running in every direction through the barracks crying, ' Dauphins, dauphins, to battle ! ' "

" And who is the man who has so well executed orders before they were issued ? "

" Upon my word, Lieutenant," replied the officer, laughing, " he looked more like a devil than a man ; half of his face is covered with a bloody bandage, his hair is burned close to his head, his cuirass is dented behind and before, and his clothes are in rags."

" Ah, very well," said Théligny, " I know whom you mean. You are right ; he is not a man, but a devil ! "

" Stay, here he is, Lieutenant !" said the officer ; and he pointed out to Théligny a horseman who was approaching on the gallop from the Isle Gate.

It was Malemort, half burned, half drowned, half killed, in the sally of the day before, and who, feeling only the better on account of it, was eager for another fray.

At the same time, from the opposite direction, — that is to say, through the Rue du Billon, at the end of which were some barracks, — advanced a little band of forty horsemen.

With the activity which characterized him when there was any chance of fighting, Malemort had had time to

run to the barracks, transmit the admiral's order, go to the Isle Gate, saddle his horse, and return to the Rémicourt Gate, where he arrived at the same time as the horsemen of the dauphin's company. The only recompense he asked for his zeal and activity was permission to join the expedition, which was granted him. He had declared that if he were not allowed to join in the sally, he would make one of his own ; and if the gates were not opened for him, he would leap from the top of the ramparts.

But Théligny, who judged him by his work the day before, requested him not to separate from the main body, and to charge in the ranks. Malemort agreed to do as he was requested.

The gate was opened and the little troop went out. But when they were hardly outside the gate, Malemort, carried away by his rage, could not constrain himself to follow the path taken by the little troop,—a path which, sheltered by trees and protected by certain inequalities of ground, would lead the forty horsemen very near the Spanish camp ; he crossed the plain in a straight line, urging his horse to his greatest speed, and crying, “Battle ! battle !”

Meanwhile the admiral, as we have said, had retired to Monsieur de Jarnac's house, and thrown himself down upon a bed ; but disturbed by a sort of presentiment, and in spite of his fatigue not able to sleep, in about half an hour he arose, and as he thought he heard cries from the direction of the rampart, he put his hand to his sword and hastened out. He had scarcely taken twenty steps in the Rue de Rémicourt, when he saw Messieurs de Luzarches and de Jarnac coming rapidly toward him. From their air of terror, it might easily be divined that something serious had happened.

"Ah," said Monsieur de Jarnac, coming up to the admiral, "you know already, then?"

"What?" asked Coligny.

The two officers looked at each other.

"If you do not know," said Monsieur de Luzarches, "why have you come out?"

"I could not sleep, I felt something like a presentiment. Hearing cries, I arose, and here I am."

"Come with us, then."

And the two officers again quickly ascended the ramparts, accompanying the admiral. The ramparts were crowded with spectators.

The following is what had taken place: Malemort's premature attack had given the alarm. The Spaniards were more numerous than had been supposed; the soldiers and the officer of the dauphin's company, who intended to surprise the enemy, found the enemy already mounted and twice as numerous as their own party. At this sight they faltered; some of the horsemen turned about, the most cowardly abandoning the bravest, who were engaged with numbers so numerous that they must soon yield unless they received help immediately. Théigny forgot his promise to the admiral; with no other weapon but his sword he mounted the first horse he found within reach, and darted off beyond the walls, calling loudly to the aid of their companions those who had turned to fly. A few of them therefore rallied about him, and with eight or ten men, hoping to make a diversion, with bowed head he charged into the midst of the Spaniards.

A moment later those who remained of the forty cavaliers of the dauphin's company could be seen retreating rapidly. Their number was diminished by a third, and Monsieur de Théigny was not among them.

It was then that Messieurs de Jarnac and de Luzarches,

thinking it important to inform the admiral of this new defeat, had turned their steps toward the house where he was taking an hour's rest, and had met him half-way. Then, as we have said, all three had hurried to the rampart which overlooked the scene of the catastrophe. There Coligny had questioned the fugitives, who had related to him the facts we have given.

With regard to Monsieur de Thé ligny, they could affirm nothing ; they had seen him come like lightning and strike the Spanish officer a blow in the face with his sword ; but he had been immediately surrounded, and, unarmed as he was, at the end of some seconds he had fallen pierced with wounds. One soldier alone affirmed that, though robbed and wounded, Monsieur de Thé ligny had not been killed, because he had seen him move as he was galloping by the place where he had fallen.

Although this hope was a very slight one, the admiral gave orders for the officers of the dauphin's company to mount, and at all costs to bring back Monsieur de Thé ligny dead or alive.

The officers who asked nothing better than to avenge their comrade, had already started for the barracks, when a sort of Goliath emerged from the crowd, and touching his helmet said, "Pardon, Monsieur l'Amiral, there is no need of a company to go and get that poor devil of a lieutenant. If you wish, Monsieur l'Amiral, I will go with my nephew Frantz, and we will bring him back alive or dead !"

The admiral turned to the man who made this generous proposition ; it was one of the adventurers whom he had taken into his service without counting much on them, and who, as we have seen, in the few encounters that had taken place thus far, had fully repaid him. He recognized Heinrich Scharfenstein ; about four steps behind his uncle, in the same attitude, as if he were his shadow, stood Frantz.

The day before the admiral had seen them at work, each defending one of the breaches in the Faubourg d'Isle ; one glance had been sufficient to show him their worth.

"Yes, my brave fellow," said the admiral, "I accept your offer. What do you want for doing it?"

"I want a horse for myself and one for my nephew Frantz."

"But that is not what I mean."

"Well, then, I want two men to ride behind us."

"Yes, but what else?"

"What else? That is all. We only want two strong horses and two thin men."

"Well, choose your horses and your men."

"Good," said Heinrich.

"But I mean that for the money — "

"Oh, the money, — that is Procope's affair."

"We do not need Procope for that," said the admiral. "I promise fifty crowns' reward for Théligny living, and twenty-five for Théligny dead."

"Oh, oh," said Heinrich, with his loud laugh, "I will do whatever you want for that price."

"Well, then, go," said the admiral, "without loss of time."

"Immediately, Monsieur l'Amiral, immediately." And Heinrich at once set about choosing his horses. Those which he selected were two cavalry horses, vigorous, broad-backed, firm on their legs.

Then he began his search for men. Suddenly he uttered a cry of joy; he saw in one direction Lactance, and in another Fracasso. A penitent and a poet, the good Heinrich thought, were the thinnest persons he could find.

The admiral did not know what to think of all these preparations; but he trusted, if not to the intelligence, at least to the instincts of the two giants.

The four adventurers descended the slope of the rampart, and disappeared under the arch of the Rémicourt Gate ; a moment later, the gate having been opened for them, they reappeared, two upon each horse, cautiously availing themselves of all those advantages of shadow and covert which had been neglected by Malemort. Then they disappeared behind a little eminence which rose on the right of the mill of La Couture.

It would be impossible to express the interest which attached to the expedition of these four men, who were going to dispute with a whole army their claim to a dead body,—for it was the opinion of those least given to foreboding that Théligny must be dead ; so that the silence which had ensued among the three or four hundred persons collected upon the rampart, while the four adventurers had remained in sight, continued after they had disappeared behind the hill.

It seemed as if this crowd were afraid to rouse by a breath or a movement the attention of the enemy.

In a short time the discharge of eight or ten arquebuses was heard. Every heart thrilled ; but almost immediately Frantz Scharfenstein reappeared on foot, bearing in his arms not one man only, but two. Behind him the cavalry and infantry of the expedition covered the retreat.

The cavalry consisted of one man on one horse ; doubtless one of the two horses had been killed by the discharge which had been heard. Fracasso and Lactance comprised the infantry, each carrying an arquebuse in his hand.

Eight or ten Spanish cavaliers harassed the retreat. But when the infantry was too closely pressed, Heinrich would make a charge, and relieve it by heavy blows with his sledge ; and when the cavalry in its turn was crowded too hard, two arquebuse shots fired at the same time, with

remarkable unity and precision of aim, laid low two Spaniards and gave Heinrich time to breathe.

Frantz meanwhile gained ground, and in a few seconds, thanks to his gigantic strides, was beyond pursuit. A cry of joy and admiration burst forth from the spectators when they saw him climbing up the embankment, carrying in his arms these two bodies, men or corpses, as a nurse would have borne two infants.

He laid down his burden at the admiral's feet. "There is your man," he said; "he is not quite dead."

"And the other?" demanded Coligny, pointing to the second wounded man.

"Oh, that one," said Frantz,— "he is of no consequence; that is Malemort. He will soon be all right! He is the devil, he can't be killed." And he began to laugh in a way that was peculiar to the uncle and nephew; it might be called the Scharfenstein laugh.

At this moment, amid the acclamations of the lookers on, the three other adventurers, cavalry and infantry, re-entered the city.

It was true, as Frantz Scharfenstein had said, that Théligny was not dead, although he had received seven sword-thrusts and three balls; these wounds were almost exposed to view, for the Spaniards had stripped from him everything but his shirt, and left him on the place where he fell, convinced that he would not revive.

He was carried to Monsieur de Jarnac's house, and placed on the same bed where the admiral an hour before had been unable to sleep, disturbed by the presentiment of the coming event. Then, as if he had waited for this moment, the wounded man opened his eyes, looked around him, and recognized the admiral.

"A doctor! a doctor!" cried Coligny eagerly, the hope which he had utterly lost reviving.

But Théligny, reaching out his hand, said, "Thanks, Monsieur l'Amiral. God permits me to see and speak again, that I may be able humbly to ask your pardon for having disobeyed you."

The admiral stopped him. "Ah, my dear Monsieur Théligny," he said, "it is not of me that you should ask pardon, for if you disobeyed me, it was from excess of zeal in the king's service; but if you are as near death as you think, and you have anything to ask, ask it of God."

"Oh, Monsieur," said Théligny, "fortunately I have to ask God to pardon only those faults which it is permitted a good gentleman to confess, while in disobeying you I have committed against discipline a grave offence. Pardon me, therefore, Monsieur l'Amiral, that I may die in peace."

Monsieur de Coligny, who appreciated so well all true courage, felt the tears welling up into his eyes as he listened to this young officer, whose only regret on leaving a life so full of promise was his neglect to obey his general's orders.

"Since you really wish it," he said, "I pardon you a fault of which a brave soldier should be proud; and if this is all that troubles you in your last moments, you may die in peace, as did Chevalier Bayard, the model for us all." And he stooped to press his lips upon the pale brow of the dying man.

The latter made an effort and raised himself up. The admiral's lips touched the young officer's brow, who murmured this single word, "Thanks," and fell back with a sigh. It was the last.

"Gentlemen," said Coligny, wiping away a tear and addressing those who were standing around him, "there is one brave gentleman less in the world. God grant us all such a death!"

CHAPTER XI.

A MESSAGE TO THE CONSTABLE.

HOWEVER brilliant had been the action in these two repulses which the admiral had met, they were no less defeats, and showed the admiral the need of prompt assistance, surrounded as they were by a numerous and vigilant army. He therefore resolved to send, before the English army should arrive and hem them in, messengers to his uncle the constable, to ask for as large a reinforcement as possible. With this intent he sent for Maldent and Yvonnet, who had been, one the guide of the poor Théligny, and the other his own.

The constable should be either at Ham or La Fère ; one of these two messengers therefore must go to Ham, the other to La Fère, to carry the news, and inform the constable of the best course by which assistance could be brought to St. Quentin. This course, which the absence of the English army rendered feasible, consisted in sending a strong column through the Savy road, which led to the Faubourg de Ponthoille, while at the same moment that it arrived in sight of the city, Coligny from the opposite direction should feign a sally, which, attracting the attention of the hostile army to the pretended point of attack, would permit the French army to reach the city safely.

The two messengers departed the same night, each the bearer of an urgent request, — one on the part of poor Malemort, and the other on the part of the desolate Gudule.

Malemort, who had received a sword-thrust in his side which fortunately had cut into an old wound, — a thing which almost always happened, to be sure, he was so cut up, — Malemort commissioned Maldent to bring him certain herbs which were necessary to renew that famous balm of Ferragus of which he used so much.

Gudule, who had received in her heart a wound more grievous and more dangerous than that of Malemort, begged Yvonnet to watch with the greatest care over a life to which her own was bound. While waiting for her dear Yvonnet, she would pass all her nights at her window, which overlooked the rampart of the Vieux-Marché.

Our two adventurers went out by the Ponthoille Gate ; then, about a half-league away on the road to Ham, Yvonnet crossed the plain to reach the road to La Fère, while Maldent continued on the road to Ham.

Yvonnet crossed the Somme between Gauchy and Gruoïs, and regained at Cerisy the road to La Fère.

We will follow Yvonnet rather than Maldent, since it was at La Fère that the constable was found.

At three o'clock in the morning Yvonnet knocked at the gate of the city, which the guard at first obstinately refused to open ; but when he learned that the nocturnal visitor had come from St. Quentin, he half opened it to let him pass.

The order had been given by the constable to admit without delay any messenger coming from his nephew, and bring the messenger to him, whatever the hour might be.

At half-past three in the morning the constable was awakened. The old soldier was lying in a bed, — a luxury he rarely allowed himself in time of war ; but he had his constable's sword under the pillow, and upon a chair near the bed, his armor and helmet ; at the slightest alarm he

would be ready to attack or defend himself. Those who served under him also were accustomed to be called at any hour of the day or night, either to give counsel or to receive orders.

Yvonnet was conducted to the chamber of the indefatigable old man, who, knowing that a messenger had arrived, was awaiting this messenger, raised on his elbow.

Scarcely had he heard Yvonnet's step when with his usual brutality he said, "Well, fellow, come here."

It was no time to stand on dignity ; Yvonnet advanced.

"Nearer," said the constable, "nearer, that I may look you in the face, rascal ! I like to see those with whom I am talking."

Yvonnet came close to the bed. "Here I am, Monseigneur," he said.

"Ah, here you are, — very good !"

He took his lamp and looked at the adventurer with a movement of the head which did not indicate that the result of inspection was favorable to the messenger.

"I have seen that fellow somewhere," said the constable to himself. Then to Yvonnet, "You are not going to give me the trouble of trying to think where I have seen you ? Come, tell me immediately ; you must remember."

"And why should I remember better than you, Monseigneur ?" said Yvonnet, unable to resist the desire to address in his turn a question to the constable.

"Because," replied the old soldier, "you see once in your life, perhaps, a Constable of France, while I see every day numbers of fellows like you."

"That is true, Monseigneur," replied Yvonnet. "Well, you saw me at court."

"What !" said the constable, "at court ? Do you go to court ?"

"I was there at least on the day when I had the honor

of seeing you, Monsieur le Connétable," replied Yvonnet with the most exquisite politeness.

"Hum!" said the constable. "Yes, I remember; you were with a young officer who had been sent to the king by my nephew."

"With Monsieur de Théligny."

"Exactly," said the constable. "Is all going well at St. Quentin?"

"On the contrary, Monseigneur, everything is going wrong."

"What! everything is going wrong? Be careful what you tell me, fellow."

"I will tell you the truth, Monseigneur. Day before yesterday in a sally made in the Faubourg d'Isle, sixty men were disabled. Yesterday, in trying to surprise a detachment of Spaniards who had taken their position before the Rémicourt Gate, we lost fifteen cavaliers of the dauphin's company, and their lieutenant, Monsieur de Théligny—"

"Théligny!" interrupted the constable, who believed himself invulnerable, having survived so many battles, so many combats, so many skirmishes; "Théligny let himself be killed? The idiot! Well?"

"Well, Monsieur le Connétable, here is a letter from Monsieur l'Amiral, demanding immediate aid."

"You ought to have given it to me before, you rascal!" said the constable, snatching the letter from the adventurer's hands. And he read it, as usual, stopping occasionally to give orders.

"I shall hold the Faubourg d'Isle as long as possible—'

"And he will do well, *mordieu!* Send me Monsieur Dandelot.

"For from its heights a battery of artillery can sweep the whole length of the rampart of Rémicourt, from the Tour à l'Eau to the Tour Rouge—'

"Let the Maréchal de Saint-André be called.

"But in order to defend the Faubourg d'Isle and other threatened points, I need a reinforcement of at least two thousand men, having in fact but five or six hundred men under my command —"

"*Corbleu!* I will send him four thousand ! Let them send Monsieur le Duc d'Enghien to me. What right have these gentlemen to sleep while I am awake ? Monsieur le Duc d'Enghien, immediately ! Well, what else does Monsieur my nephew say ?

"I have only sixteen pieces of cannon ; I have only fifty or sixty arquebuses ; lastly, I have ammunition sufficient for only fifteen days, and provisions for only three weeks."

"What ! can all this be true ?" cried the constable.

"It is the exact truth, Monseigneur !" replied Yvonnet, respectfully.

"Indeed, I would like to see a scoundrel like you giving the lie to my nephew. Hum !" And the constable glared at Yvonnet.

Yvonnet bowed, and retired a few steps.

"Why do you draw back ?" asked the constable.

"Because I think that Monseigneur has nothing more to say to me."

"You are mistaken. Come here."

Yvonnet resumed his former position.

"And the citizens, how do they behave ?" demanded the constable.

"Wonderfully well, Monseigneur !"

"The rascals ! I would like to see them do otherwise."

"Even the monks have taken up arms."

"Hypocrites ! And you say that they fight ?"

"Like lions ! As to the women, Monseigneur —"

"They moan and weep and tremble ? That is all the hussies can do."

"On the contrary, Monseigneur, they encourage the combatants, they nurse the wounded, they bury the dead."

"The jades!"

At that moment the door opened, and a gentleman fully armed, except that he had upon his head a velvet cap, appeared upon the threshold.

"Ah, come here, Monsieur Dandelot," said the constable; "here is your brother raising an outcry in his city of St. Quentin, because he thinks he is going to be murdered."

"Monseigneur," replied Monsieur Dandelot, laughing, "if my brother your nephew raises an outcry, you know I presume that it is not through fear."

"Yes, *morbleu!* I know that there is reason for it, and that is what troubles me. Therefore I have sent for you and Monsieur le Maréchal de Saint-André —"

"Here I am, Monseigneur," interrupted the marshal, at the same time entering the room.

"Good, Maréchal! And Monsieur d'Enghien has not yet come!"

"Pardon, Monseigneur," said the duke, as he also entered the chamber, "here I am."

"*Tripes et boyaux,* gentlemen!" said the constable, launching his great oath with all the more violence since, as every one had done his duty, he did not know on whom to vent that bad temper which formed the basis of his character. "*Tripes et boyaux,* gentlemen! we are not at Capua, that we can sleep so soundly as you seem to have slept!"

"That cannot be meant for me," said the marshal, "for I had already risen."

"And I," said the Duc d'Enghien, "had not gone to bed."

"No; I mean it for Monsieur Dandelot."

"Me!" said Dandelot. "Monseigneur will pardon me, but I was on patrol duty; and if I arrived here before these gentlemen, it was because I was already mounted and hastened hither on horseback."

"Then it was meant for myself," said Montmorency. "I appear to be old and good for nothing, since I was the only one who had gone to bed — *Tête et sang!*!"

"But, Constable," said Dandelot, laughing, "who the devil says that?"

"No one, I hope; for if any one should say that, I would break his jawbone, as I did that of the prophet of evil omen whom I met the other day upon the road. But I sent for you for something else. The question is how to carry aid to this poor devil of a Coligny, who has fifty thousand men against him. Fifty thousand men! — what do you say to that? It is my opinion that my nephew is frightened and sees double."

The three officers smiled at the same time and with the same expression.

"If my brother says fifty thousand men," replied Dandelot, "it is fifty thousand men, Monseigneur."

"And sixty thousand rather than fifty thousand," said the Maréchal de Saint-André.

"And you, Monsieur d'Enghien, what do you think?"

"Why, Monsieur le Connétable, I agree with these gentlemen."

"Then you, as usual, differ from me?"

"No, Monsieur le Connétable," replied Dandelot; "but we think that the admiral tells the truth."

"Well, are you ready to risk anything to help the admiral?"

"I am ready to risk my life," replied Dandelot.

"And we also," said at once the Maréchal de Saint-André and the Duc d'Enghien.

"Then all is well!" said the constable.

Then looking round in the direction of the antechamber where a great noise could be heard, "*Corbleu!*" he said, "what is all this hubbub?"

"Monseigneur," said one of the officers of the guard, "a man has just been arrested at the Ham Gate."

"Let him be taken to prison."

"We think he is a soldier disguised as a peasant."

"Let him be hanged!"

"But he claims to be a messenger from the admiral."

"Has he a letter of safe-conduct?"

"No; and that is our reason for thinking him a spy."

"Let him be put to the rack!"

"One moment!" cried a voice in the antechamber. "Men must n't be treated like that, even by Monsieur le Connétable." And after the sound of a noisy struggle, a man precipitated himself into the chamber.

"Ah, take care what you do, Monseigneur; it is Maldent!"

"And who is Maldent?" demanded the constable.

"He is the second messenger sent you by the admiral, and who having left St. Quentin at the same time as myself, naturally arrives two hours later because he first went to Ham."

It was indeed Maldent, who, not having found the constable at Ham, had taken a horse and ridden with all speed from Ham to La Fère, for fear that something might have happened to Yvonnet on the way.

Now, how was it that Maldent, who had set out in military costume and with a letter from the admiral, arrived dressed as a peasant and without a letter? This, with their usual perspicacity, our readers will divine in one of the following chapters.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ASSAULT.

OUR readers must not be surprised if we follow, with a precision that belongs rather to the historian than to the novelist, all the details — of attack and defence — of that glorious siege of St. Quentin ; a siege equally glorious for the assailants and for the defenders. In our opinion the grandeur of a nation consists as much in its defeats as in its victories ; the glory of its triumphs is enhanced by that of its reverses.

What people, indeed, would not have succumbed after Crécy, after Poitiers, after Agincourt, after St. Quentin, at Waterloo ? But the hand of God was over France, and after each defeat France rose again grander than before.

It was only after falling seven times under the weight of the cross that Jesus saved the world. France, under this analogy, if it be permitted us, may be no other than the Christ among the nations. And St. Quentin was one of the stations of France bearing the cross. The cross was the monarchy.

Fortunately, behind the monarchy was the people ; and now at last behind a fallen monarchy we are about to see a people standing upright.

During the night after the departure of Yvonnet and Maldent the admiral was notified that the sentinels guarding the Faubourg d'Isle thought they heard noises that indicated mining operations. Coligny rose and hastened to the place that seemed to be threatened.

The admiral was an experienced captain. He dismounted from his horse, lay down on the rampart, applied his ear to the ground, and listened. Then rising, "It is not the sound of mining," he said; "it is the sound of moving cannon. The enemy is bringing up his pieces to form a battery."

The officers looked at one another; and Jarnac, coming forward, said, "Monsieur l'Amiral, do you know that, according to the general opinion, this place is not tenable?"

The admiral smiled. "It is my opinion also, gentlemen," he said; "and yet you see we have held it for five days. If I had retired when you urged me to do so, the Faubourg d'Isle would have been during these five days in the hands of the Spaniards, and the task which remains to them of assaulting the city would have been achieved. Now, bear this in mind, gentlemen, every day that we gain is as important to us as are the last gasps of her failing breath to the deer pursued in the chase."

"Your opinion, then, Monseigneur?—"

"My opinion is that we have done on this side all that it was possible to do, and that we must apply elsewhere our strength, our devotion, and our vigilance."

The officers bowed, in sign of acquiescence.

"At daybreak," continued Coligny, "the Spanish guns will be in position, and the cannonade will begin. By daybreak, therefore, all the artillery we have at this point, the munitions, the balls of wool, the wheelbarrows, the litters, the pikes, the tools of all kinds, must be carried into the city. A portion of our men will be engaged in that task; another portion will pile up fagots in the houses, and the fascines which I have had prepared, and will set fire to them. I will myself superintend the retreat, and will see that the bridges are destroyed behind us."

Then, as he saw around him the poor unfortunates to whom those houses belonged, and who listened to these orders with an appearance of sorrow, "My friends," said he, "your houses, spared by us, would be destroyed by the Spaniards, who would use their material against us; make the sacrifice yourselves to your king and your country; I give you the task of applying the torch."

The residents in the Faubourg d'Isle looked at one another, exchanged a few words in a low tone; and one of them coming forward, said,—

"Monsieur l'Amiral, I am Guillaume Pauquet; you can see my house from here,—it is the largest in the quarter. I assume the task of setting fire to my house; and my neighbors and friends here will do the same by theirs."

"Is that true, my children?" asked the admiral, with tears in his eyes.

"Is it for the good of the king and of the nation that you require it, Monsieur l'Amiral?"

"Only hold out with me fifteen days, my friends, and we shall save France," said Coligny.

"And that you may hold out ten days longer it is necessary that we burn our houses?"

"I think, my friends, that it is necessary."

"Then, if we burn our houses you are sure to hold out?"

"I am sure, my friends, to do all that a gentleman devoted to the king and to the country is able to do," said the admiral. "If any one talks of surrendering the city, I will throw him from the top of the wall; if I talk of surrendering, let me be served in the same way."

"Very well, Monsieur l'Amiral, whenever you give the order for burning the houses the torch will be applied."

"But," said a voice, "I sincerely hope that the abbey of St. Quentin will be spared."

The admiral turned toward the speaker and recognized Lactance. "St. Quentin least of all," he said. "The platform of St. Quentin overlooks the rampart of Rémi-court, and a battery placed on that platform would render the defence of the rampart impossible."

Lactance raised his eyes to heaven and uttered a deep sigh.

"Besides," continued the admiral, smiling, "St. Quentin is, above all things, the protector of the city, and he will not take it ill of us if we prevent his abbey being made use of to ruin those whom he protects."

Then, taking advantage of the devotedness inspiring in every mind the same zeal, the admiral gave orders that they should begin drawing the cannon toward the city, and should transport in carts the several objects which he indicated,— everything to be done in the greatest possible silence.

The citizens applied themselves to their appointed tasks, and it must be said that those who carried fascines into the houses displayed as much zeal as those who harnessed themselves to cannon and carts to draw them to the city.

At two o'clock in the morning everything had been brought in, and there remained behind the old wall only a sufficient number of arquebusiers to make a show of defence, and those who, torch in hand, held themselves in readiness to set fire to the houses.

At daybreak, as the admiral had foreseen, the Spaniards fired their first volley. A breaching battery had been planted during the night, and it was in fact the noise made in that undertaking which the admiral had heard.

That first volley was the signal agreed upon for setting fire to the faubourg. Not one of the inhabitants hesi-

tated ; each heroically applied his torch to the fascines, and immediately a curtain of smoke ascended toward the sky, soon to give place to a curtain of flame.

The faubourg was on fire from the church of St. Eloi to that of St. Pierre-au-Canal ; but in the midst of that vast furnace, as if a superhuman power warded off the flame, the abbey of St. Quentin remained unharmed. Three times through the fire and crossing by flying bridges, the others having been cut away, the citizens first, then the soldiers, and finally the firemen, went to renew the attempt ; and three times the attempt was unsuccessful.

The admiral, from the summit of the Porte d'Isle, was following the progress of destruction when Jean Pauquet, leaving a group of fellow-citizens, drew near to the admiral, hat in hand, and said, —

“ Monseigneur, there is an old man in the city who says he has heard his father say that there is a deposit of powder in one or the other of the two towers on either side the Porte d'Isle, and perhaps in both.”

“ Good ! ” said the admiral ; “ we must find out about that ; where are the keys ? ”

“ Ah, the keys,” said Jean Pauquet ; “ who knows where they are ? It is perhaps a hundred years since the doors were opened.”

“ Very well ; bring levers and crowbars to open them.”

“ There is no need of levers and crowbars,” said a voice, with a strong German accent ; “ let me push the door, and the door will open.”

It was Heinrich Scharfenstein, who, followed by his nephew Frantz, approached Coligny.

“ Ah, it is you, my brave giant ? ” said the admiral.

“ Yes, I and my nephew Frantz.”

“ Well, push, my friend, push ! ”

Each of the two Scharfensteins went to a door, applied his back to it, and acting like a double mechanism obedient each to the same impulse, having braced themselves they counted, "One, two, three," and at the word "three," each made a supreme effort against the fold of the door which he had attacked, and so victoriously that both men fell at the same time with the doors. Only, since the doors offered different degrees of resistance, Frantz Scharfenstein fell at full length, while Heinrich, more favored, simply sat down.

Both, however, rose with their customary coolness, saying, "Done!"

An entrance was made into the towers. One of them, as Jean Pauquet had said, contained two or three thousand pounds of powder; but, as he had also said, that powder had been there through so long a period that when an attempt was made to lift the casks they fell to pieces. Then the admiral ordered that cloths should be brought, in which the powder might be conveyed to the arsenal.

After seeing that this last order was in the way of fulfilment, the admiral returned to his lodgings to take breakfast and to snatch if possible a little rest; for he had been on his feet since midnight, and had eaten nothing since the evening before. He had just sat down at the table when word was brought to him that one of the messengers whom he had sent to the constable had returned, and wished to speak with him without delay.

The messenger was Yvonnet, who came to inform the admiral that the reinforcements which he had asked would arrive on the following day, commanded by his brother, Monsieur Dandelot, the Maréchal de Saint-André, and the Duc d'Enghien.

These reinforcements would comprise four thousand infantry, who, following the directions given by the ad-

miral, would approach by the Savy road, and would enter the city by way of the Faubourg de Ponthoille.

Maldent had remained at La Fère to serve as a guide to Monsieur Dandelot.

Yvonnet had reached this point in his report, and taken up a glass of wine in which to drink the admiral's health, when simultaneously the earth trembled, the walls shook, the window-glasses were shivered in fragments, and a noise was heard as of a hundred pieces of cannon thundering at once.

The admiral arose ; Yvonnet, seized with a nervous trembling, replaced his glass of wine untasted upon the table.

At the same time a cloud passed over the city carried by the east wind, and a strong odor of sulphur filled the apartment through the broken window-panes.

"Oh, the rascals!" said the admiral ; "they have not taken necessary precautions, and the powder has exploded."

Immediately, and without waiting for intelligence, he went out of the house and hastened to the Isle Gate.

The whole population were hurrying in the same direction. The admiral could obtain no information ; everybody was rushing in the direction of the sound, but was ignorant of its cause.

Coligny was not mistaken ; he saw the tower in ruins and smoking like the crater of a volcano. A spark from the conflagration which surrounded it had entered one of the loopholes, and had set fire to the terrific combustible.

Forty or fifty persons had perished ; five officers who were directing the operation had disappeared.

The tower offered to the enemy a breach through which twenty-five men could climb abreast.

Fortunately, the fire and smoke which extended from

the faubourg to the city, concealed this breach from the Spaniards ; in this way the devotion of the inhabitants in setting fire to their houses had saved the city.

Coligny comprehended the danger ; he called upon all to assist in repairing the breach, but the citizens alone responded. The soldiers, who had been recalled from the faubourg, had gone to procure food and rest.

Among those who had gone to get food and rest were the two Scharfensteins ; but as their tent was only about fifty steps from the scene of events, they were among the first to respond to the admiral's appeal.

Heinrich and Frantz were important auxiliaries in such a case ; their herculean strength and their gigantic stature rendered them invaluable. They took off their doublets, rolled up their sleeves, and made masons of themselves.

Three hours later, whether because the enemy knew nothing of the catastrophe or because they were engaged in preparations for some other attack, the repairs had been completed without any hindrance, and the tower was almost as solid as before.

All this day — the 7th of August — passed without any demonstration from the enemy ; they seemed to be confining themselves simply to a blockade. Doubtless they were awaiting the arrival of the English army.

That night the sentinels observed a commotion in the direction of the Faubourg d'Isle. The Spaniards of Carondelet and those of Julian Romero, taking advantage of the decline of the fire, began to enter the faubourg and approach the city. All surveillance, therefore, was concentrated in that direction.

At ten o'clock the admiral called together at his house the principal officers of the garrison ; he announced to them that in all probability reinforcements would arrive that night. Therefore it was necessary to man secretly

the walls from Tourival to the Ponthoille Gate, so as to be ready to give aid if necessary to Dandelot and his men.

Yvonnet, who in his capacity of messenger had been informed of these arrangements, had rejoiced to see them adopted, and as far as was in his power — for from his very precise knowledge of localities he was not without a certain influence — he had caused the night watchmen to be put forward toward the Rémicourt Gate, the Isle Gate, and the Ponthoille Gate.

This arrangement indeed left entirely uncovered, except for the presence of a few sentinels, the rampart of the Vieux-Marché, where was situated, as will be remembered, Jean Pauquet's house, and especially the little pavilion occupied by Mademoiselle Gudule.

Therefore about eleven o'clock on one of those dark nights so valued and blessed by lovers who are going to see their mistresses, and by soldiers who are preparing a surprise, our adventurer, followed by Heinrich and Frantz, all armed to the teeth, advanced with precaution through the streets of Les Rosiers, La Fosse, and St. Jean, and regained, about a hundred steps from the Dameuse Tower, the rampart of the Vieux-Marché.

The three adventurers followed this path, because they were aware that the whole space extending from the Dameuse Tower to the gate of the Vieux-Marché was not provided with sentinels, the enemy having made no demonstration on that side. The boulevard was therefore dark and deserted.

Why did this little band, which in spite of its formidable appearance had no hostile intention, consist of Heinrich and Frantz on one side and Yvonnet on the other ?

Because of that law of nature by which in this world

weakness seeks strength, and strength attaches itself to weakness.

With whom of his eight companions had Yvonnet formed the most intimate friendship? With Heinrich and with Frantz. Why? Because they were the strongest and he was the weakest.

When the two Scharfensteins had a moment's leisure, in whose company were they eager to spend it? Yvonnet's.

So when Yvonnet had need of any assistance, of whom did he ask it? Of the two Scharfensteins.

In his costume always neat, always smart, always elegant, contrasting with the rude and soldierlike costume of the two giants, Yvonnet followed by them appeared like a child holding in leash two immense hounds.

It was on account of this attraction of weakness toward strength and this sympathy of strength for weakness that on this evening again Yvonnet had asked the two Scharfensteins if they would go with him, and that, as usual, they had immediately risen and armed themselves, saying, "Very willingly, Monsieur Yvonnet."

For the two Scharfensteins called Yvonnet "Monsieur," — a distinction they accorded no other of their companions. This was because their friendship for Yvonnet was mingled with a profound respect. Neither the uncle nor the nephew ever permitted himself to address the young adventurer; no, they heard him talk of beautiful women, splendid weapons, fine clothes, and confined themselves to nodding approval and occasionally responding to his sallies of wit with the Scharfenstein laugh.

Where Yvonnet was going when he said to them, "Come with me," did not concern them; he had said, "Come," — that was sufficient, and they followed him as satellites follow a planet. That evening Yvonnet was

going to his mistress ; he had said to the two Scharfensteins, "Come," and, as we have seen, they had come.

But with what purpose, since the rendezvous was to be one of those in which the presence of a third person is always annoying, had Yvonnet invited the attendance of the two giants ?

In the first place, we hasten to say that the brave Germans were by no means troublesome spectators ; they would close one eye, or two, or three, or four, upon a word or a sign from their companion, and keep them religiously closed until a word or a sign from him should permit them to open them again.

Yvonnet had brought them with him because, as may be remembered, to reach the window of Gudule's pavilion it was necessary to use a ladder ; instead of bringing a ladder, he had thought it more simple to bring the Scharfensteins, — which amounted to precisely the same thing.

The young man had, as may easily be imagined, a collection of signals, noises, cries, by which he announced his presence to his mistress ; but on this evening there was no occasion for cry, noise, or signal, — Gudule was waiting at her window.

Nevertheless, when she saw three men coming instead of one, she prudently withdrew.

Then Yvonnet detached himself from the group and was recognized ; and the young girl, trembling still, but no longer afraid, appeared again at the window.

In a few words Yvonnet explained to his mistress the danger that a soldier in a besieged city would incur by going about with a ladder on his back ; the patrol might think that he was carrying a ladder for the purpose of communicating with the enemy. If he were once suspected by the patrol, he would have to follow the chief of

the patrol to an officer, a captain, the governor perhaps, and explain the purpose of the ladder,— an explanation which, however delicately made, would compromise Mademoiselle's honor. It was better, therefore, to rely upon two friends in whose discretion he could trust as could Yvonnet in that of his two companions.

But how two friends could take the place of a ladder, Mademoiselle Gudule could not easily understand ; so Yvonnet lost no time in unfolding the theory and giving a practical demonstration of it. For this purpose, he called the two Scharfensteins, who, separating the immense pair of compasses which served them as legs, reached him in three strides. Then he set the uncle up back to the wall, and beckoned to the nephew.

In less time than is required to describe it Frantz placed one foot upon his uncle's clasped hands, another upon his shoulder ; then, on reaching the level of the window, he took Mademoiselle Gudule by the waist, who was curiously watching, and who, before she could make a movement of defence,— which, however, perhaps she would not have made in any case,— found herself lifted from her chamber and deposited on the boulevard by the side of Yvonnet.

"There !" said Frantz, laughing ; " there is the young girl called for."

"Thanks," said Yvonnet ; and taking Gudule's arm under his own, he led her toward the most obscure place on the rampart. That place was the circular summit of one of the towers, protected by a parapet three feet high.

The two Scharfensteins went apart and sat on a sort of stone bench placed against the wall.

It is not our purpose to record here the conversation that ensued between Yvonnet and Mademoiselle Gudule.

They were young, and they were in love; it was three days and three nights since they had met, and they had so many things to talk about that this chapter certainly could not contain all that they said to each other in a quarter of an hour.

We say "in a quarter of an hour," for at the end of that time Yvonnet broke off the conversation, placed his hand on the pretty mouth of his companion, leaned his head forward, and listened. As he listened, he thought he heard a noise like that of the rustling of grass under numerous feet. He looked, and thought he saw something like a huge black serpent crawling at the foot of the wall.

But the night was so dark, and the noise so slight, that all this might easily be an illusion instead of a reality; which was the more probable since both movement and noise suddenly ceased. Yvonnet looked and listened, but could neither hear nor see anything. Nevertheless, while still holding the young girl enfolded in his arms, he continued to watch, with his head bent forward. In a short time he thought he saw the gigantic serpent lift its head against the gray wall and climb toward the parapet. Then, like a many-headed hydra, the serpent threw out a second head near the first, and a third near the second.

Yvonnet understood the situation. Without loss of a moment he passed Gudule, urging her to silence, into the hands of Frantz, who with his uncle's help immediately restored her to her chamber by the same process by which he had taken her from it.

Meanwhile Yvonnet, running to the nearest ladder, arrived at the moment when the first Spaniard placed his foot on the parapet. There was a flash in the darkness, then a cry; and the Spaniard, pierced through by Yvonnet's thin blade, fell headlong from the wall.

The noise of his fall was lost in that arising from the second ladder, which loaded with men, and pushed by Heinrich's vigorous arms, scraped along the wall with a hoarse groaning.

Nor had Frantz been idle. Finding in his way an abandoned beam, he had raised it above his head and dropped it, crosswise, on the third ladder. The ladder had broken at about two thirds of its height; and beam, ladder, and men had fallen together into the ditch.

Yvonnet, still striking his best blows, called loudly for help. The Scharfensteins hastened to his assistance, and reached him at a moment when three Spaniards, who had gained a footing on the rampart, were pressing him closely. One of the assailants fell cloven in two by Heinrich's enormous sword; another rolled over, knocked on the head by Frantz's sledge; the third, in the act of striking Yvonnet, was seized by the belt by one of the two giants, and sent flying from the wall.

Just then Jean and Guillaume Pauquet, bearing torches and axes, appeared at the end of the Rue Vieux-Marché, drawn thither by the cries of the three adventurers.

The failure of the surprise was from that moment complete; and when the citizens and the adventurers joined their outcries a double reinforcement arrived,—from the Tour St. Jean, and from the big tower in the Faubourg de Ponthoille.

And then—as if all these attacks had been prearranged to be made at the same time—the detonation of a thousand arquebuses could be heard, at a distance of about half a league, in the direction of Savy, beyond the chapel of Épargnemaille; and between earth and sky could be seen that reddish smoke which hovers over the place where there are heavy discharges of musketry.

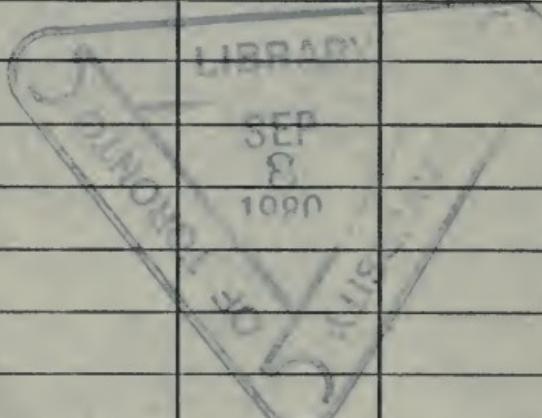
The two enterprises — that of the Spaniards to surprise the city and that of Dandelo to succor it — had been discovered. We have seen how chance defeated that of the Spaniards ; we will show how chance also defeated that of the French.

END OF VOL. I.



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